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A LOUSY AND LUCKY LIFE

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

BY

PAUL KUTTNER

ALTERNATIVE TITLES:

BATTLING WITHOUT AN END
DAMNED AND STILL BLESSED
ONE DAMNED THING AFTER ANOTHER
EVENTS THAT SHAPED MY LIFE
SHORT STORIES OF A LONG LIFE
FOREVER UPHILL

Plus 30 photos

Paul Kuttner
37-26 87th Street
Apt. #5-C
Jackson Heights
New York 11372

Tel.:718-446-2179

PREVIOUS PUBLISHED TITLES

BY

PAUL KUTTNER

FICTION:

THE MAN WHO LOST EVERYTHING (Also became a bestseller in the Spanish-language edition.)

CONDEMNED
ABSOLUTE PROOF
THE IRON VIRGIN

NON-FICTION:

HISTORY'S TRICKIEST QUESTIONS
ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT'S TRICKIEST QUESTIONS
SCIENCE'S TRICKIEST QUESTIONS
THE HOLOCAUST:HOAX OR HISTORY? - THE BOOK OF ANSWERS TO THOSE WHO WOULD DENY THE HOLOCAUST

Plus nine additional titles translated from German into English.

DEDICATION

In loving memory of

Margarete and Paul Kuttner, my parents

Annemarie, my sister

Marie and Ursula Fraenkel,

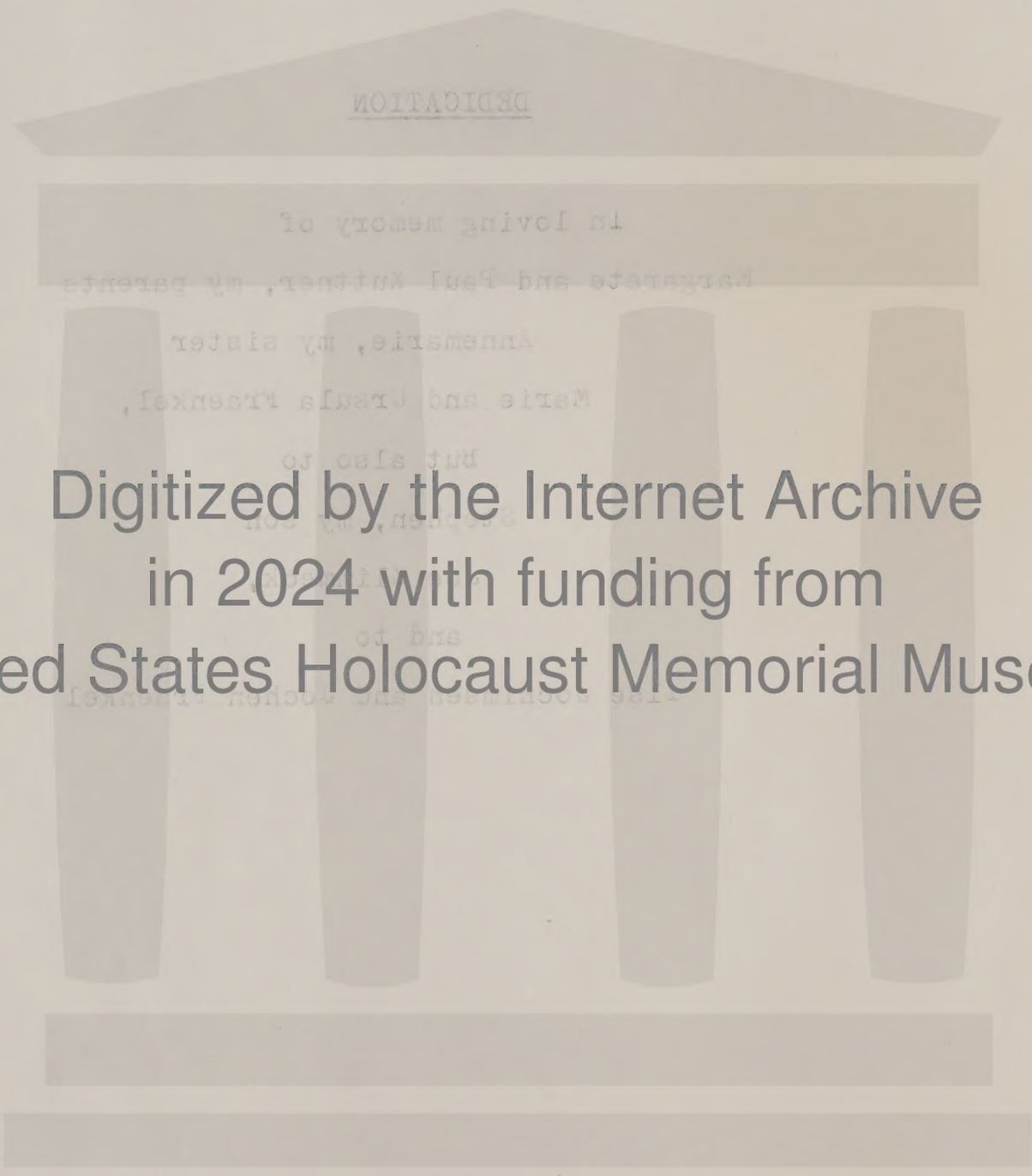
but also to

Stephen, my son

Joe Klimmeck

and to

Ilse Jochimsen and Jochen Fraenkel



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A LOUSY AND LUCKY LIFE
Autobiography by
Paul Kuttner

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HITLER AND ME: LIGHTS! CAMERA! ACTION! (1933)

In retrospect it seems strange that one of the earliest and most distinct memories I have of a noteworthy event in my life dates back to an unplanned encounter with probably the most famous (and infamous) person of the twentieth century: Adolf Hitler.

At the time, in the summer of 1933,I was ten years old and not yet overly interested in the finer points and more brutal aspects of contemporary history,although the non-stop political propaganda churned out by Dr.Goebbels's own ministry soon invaded every nook and cranny of life in Nazi Germany.

Throughout the 1920s, however, Germany dragged itself through the tragic consequences of the Versailles Treaty, but my father, Dr.Paul Kuttner, turned out to be one of the more fortunate citizens of the post-war Reich. He actually became the medical doctor-in-residence at the world-famous UFA movie studios in Neubabelsberg near Berlin,the reason for it being that he had been a military comrade-in-arms of Erich Pommer in the German army during World War I,having saved the life of that man, who had become one of the heads of UFA in 1920.

Many a time during my summer vacations from my Berlin elementary school (on Nachodstrasse) I visited my father in the late 1920s and early 1930s at the studio and was lucky enough to meet some of the most illustrious German movie stars of the day,such as Emil Jannings (who had an American father), Heinz Rühmann,Conrad Veidt, Hans Albers,Willy Fritsch and Lilian Harvey;also a little-known actor, Veit Harlan,who during the Nazi period became famous for directing the most anti-Semitic film ever, "Jud Süss." Another prominent screen-star,Marika Rökk (the German Ginger Rogers),later became the mistress of Germany's best-known Harness-race jockey,Frömming,and he had rented a room for these trysts at my father's place at Kurfürstendamm 72 in the late 1930s; here I often met these two celebrities,after my father had suffered a stroke and could no longer support his family

from the proceeds of his medical practice.

One day, in July 1933, while I was watching an indoor scene being shot with actress Marianne Hoppe, a thunderous banging of fists on the huge sliding steel doors outside completely destroyed the shooting of the scene. The performers and director cursed the person responsible for this calamity since a flashing red light outside each sound-stage building always indicated that a scene was being shot indoors.

A stagehand opened the sliding doors and a second later about two dozen of the tallest SS men came storming into the studio and formed a gangway by facing each other, arms linked akimbo. Even at this early stage of the Nazi regime, the SS was feared by everybody. The angry muttering inside the studio had died down completely as everybody, puzzled and frightened, stared at the blinding sunlit summer scene outside. That's when it dawned on us what was happening: a smiling Adolf Hitler, in a light-colored raincoat, came sauntering into the studio and the movie director rushed forward to welcome him.

I was scared out of my wits and looked for my father in order to join him. I saw him standing behind one of the SS bodyguards (Leibstandarte Adolf Hitler) on the other side of the free passage prepared for Hitler. Unthinking and immature, I ducked under the joined arms of two of the SS men and raced across the "corridor" provided by the black-uniformed giants for their Führer.

What I had not bargained for were the innumerable movie-camera cables snaking all over the floor. Halfway across the path made for Hitler, I tripped over one of these cables and fell flat on my face in my Tyrolean-peasant leather outfit, about five yeards from the Nazi dictator. Realizing that the movie cameras were focusing on him, he took this golden opportunity to rush forward and help me up off the floor. I rose and apologized. Hitler, conscious of

the propaganda value of displaying to the world how much he liked children, stooped and impulsively hugged me for a few moments (the only occasion he was ever caught embracing a person in public), asking me whether I was hurt. This gave me a chance to explain that I was okay and only visiting my father (actually I was in my Boy Scouts - Pfadfinder - uniform, an organization that was shortly thereafter disbanded by the Nazis), since Hitler also wanted to know whether I was playing a part in the movie being shot. Straightening up, he patted my cheek, nodded at my father whom I had pointed out to him, and went on his way to meet the movie crew.

This scene, of course, was shown in the newsreels throughout Nazi Germany a week later and made my life thereafter a great deal easier for me in school, Berlin's Bismarck Gymnasium, that I had just entered after graduating from elementary school.

Decades later, I as well as my good friend Stefan Roloff, a Berlin-born documentary filmmaker in the U.S., whose father, Helmut, had helped to save my sister's life during the war in Nazi Germany, tried to obtain a copy of that particular footage for a movie he was shooting, titled "The Red Orchestra", but because of some copyright clause, he was told, these old news clippings are strictly off the market now for any purpose whatsoever.

Nevertheless, a few months after that brief encounter, actually in the late summer of 1933, Nazi Propaganda Minister, Dr. Josef Goebbels, personally saw to it that my father, who had been awarded the Iron Cross First Class early in World War I, was discharged from UFA because of his Jewish ancestry. Surprisingly, at that time he was still permitted to continue practicing medicine at his Kurfürstendamm office as well as at the West End Sanatorium on Ranke Strasse, where my mother had given birth to my sister Annemarie and me in 1912 and 1922 respectively, and at the Virchow

Hospital in Berlin, at least until 1936. At that time he suffered a totally disabling stroke, which frequently turned me into a kind of teenage nurse for him at the age of thirteen.

Only once, in 1938, when my father was half-way ambulatory again and with great difficuly used a cane for walking, did a friend of ours offer to take him and me by car to his former workplace, the Ufa Studios at Neubabelsberg, for an afternoon's outing, and although my father had been greatly weakened by the stroke, he gladly accepted the offer.

We arrived at the studios shortly after lunch, watching a few scenes being shot for a couple of movies in production, and when we were about to leave and slowly moved down the August-Bebel Strasse outside the Ufa Studios to reach the temporary parking lot, somebody called after us: "Herr Doktor! Herr Doktor!"

We turned and saw Germany's best-loved movie star rush toward us: Hans Albers - - a he-man as Aryan-looking and a blond giant,to boot, as Hitler would have wished for any Nazi poster.

When Albers finally reached us, he grabbed my father's paralyzed,icy hand and lifted it to his lips,kissing it.

"What did they do you, Herr Doktor! What did the bastards do to you!" he demanded.

My father still had great difficulty expressing himself verbally, with part of his brain affected by the massive stroke, and I explained to Albers the reason for my father's uncommunicative attitude. Immediately, the actor dropped my father's lifeless hand and embraced him firmly.

When he stepped back again, there were tears in his eyes, but for that matter tears also trembled on my father's eyelashes.

All my father was able, then, to respond to the star's heartfelt outburst was a simple "Mach's gut, Hans!" (an almost

untranslatable German vernacular colloquialism, meaning broadly "Good luck!")

He squeezed his rubber-tipped cane under his upper arm and patted Albers's cheek gently with his good hand, where the star held it in place for a few moments.

Finally, Albers bade us adieu and he went on his way. Everywhere he was known to decline Goebbels's demand to play in Nazi-oriented films, concentrating instead only on melodramatic adventure and daredevil stories. Even more telling is the fact that he refused the Nazi order to divorce his Jewish wife, althpugh, sadly, he never regained the enormous popularity with German movie audiences after the war that he had enjoyed throughout the 1930s.

What concerns my father, who I had always loved and admired, in spite of deserting my darling mother, he was arrested by the Gestapo in 1942 notwithstanding his illustrious World War I record and his feeble state of health. A few months later already he perished in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt (Terezin) in Czechoslovakia, according to the International Tracing Service of Arolsen, Germany, in 1981. He was sixty-four years old.

Ironically, only one thing of him remains in Berlin, where he had lived at Kurfürstendamm 72. To the left of his street-entrance, the enamelled sign advertising his name, medical profession and daily practicing hours had been fastened to a wooden board, which in turn had been grafted to the brickwall of the building, and this unobtrusive weatherbeaten wooden board is still rivetted to the left of the street's frontdoor more than sixty years after the Nazis had murdered him in Theresienstadt.

That wooden board and my memory of him are all that is left. Even our frequent outings on Sundays to the celebrated Berlin restaurant, Kempinsky, on the Kurfürstendamm a few blocks from his

medical office, where he lived with his second wife, I recall distinctly, I remember them for two reasons: Foremost, because here I sometimes saw an old German actor, Otto Gebühr, impersonate Frederick the Great in full regalia; and secondly because on one occasion my father introduced me at the age of ten in 1933 to the restaurant's owner, Gerhard Kempinsky, who in turn introduced me to some German champagne, which - it developed later - had been sold to him every month since the 1920s by a man named Joachim von Ribbentrop, (who later became Hitler's Foreign Minister).

Years later, after Kempinsky had been forced to emigrate as a Jew to England, he had opened his own restaurant during the war in the West End of London and this place was frequented by many English movie stars. Because of his guttural German accent, these actors persuaded Gerhard to portray Nazis and German officers in British war films, which he did with great flair. But because of his former friendship with my father, he always insisted that I have meals eating in his establishment without paying for them.

Shortly before I left England for the United States in 1947 to say good-bye to Gerhard, I learned that he had just attended the funeral of his headwaiter and, there, during the actual burial ceremony, he himself had dropped dead of a heart attack.

MOURNING A BULLY. (1933)

A tragic accident that I could not help watching before I reached my eleventh / birthday took place on the outskirts of Berlin on a beautiful summer's day in 1933.

I had known Franz Thomas, the 18-year-old bully on the Berlin street (Regensburger Strasse), where I used to play with other youngsters my age or older since Kindergarten, and we admired him for his ability to beat up anybody, including me, without any provocation whatsoever - - I suppose to keep us in line - - and all of us boys (girls did not play on our street) accepted him unquestioningly as our leader, if not exactly as our hero, since we were scared to death of him.

Thomas, as he insisted on being addressed, who was the son of a neighborhood super ("Portier") in the late 1920s and early 1930s, loved to boast that he had become a member of the Communist Party. He happened to be six to eight years older than the two closest friends I had on my street: Arthur "Atti" Speyer and Werner Alberti. As a boy, Atti's father had known Karl May in Radebeul near Dresden, who happened to be Germany's (and Hitler's) favorite Wild West adventure writer, which impressed us kids enormously, and Werner's father claimed he had taught Richard Tauber, Austria's most famous tenor, how to sing.

However, within days of Hitler coming to power in January 1933, Thomas / switched from the Communist Party to become a member of the Hitler Youth. His favorite expression, whenever that nerd liked announcing his presence, happened to be "Judas, verrecke!" ("Jew-scum, die!"). And being counted as a Jew under Hitler's non-negotiable terms, I resented this verbal threat much more than being beaten up by him on a regular basis. Generally we boys

referred to him behind his back as the Red Nazi.

One day, a month or so before I took my final swim test at a Hamburg swimming pool (the open-air Lattenkamp swimming pool), all of us Berlin urchins took a Sunday's outing to the Spreewald, a forest on the outskirts of Berlin, through which the German capital's river, the Spree, flowed. Another attraction there was the native Spreewald-women who always wore the most picturesque and elaborate costumes imaginable.

But on that particular warm Sunday in the early summer of 1933, Thomas in his new Hitler Youth uniform tried to show off his muscular strength to us impressionable youngsters by climbing trees on the banks of the Spree and on one occasion of devil-may-care bravado he literally went all the way out on a limb, like an agile monkey in a jungle, hanging by his arms and legs from a branch protruding well above the swift rather dirty waters of the Spree, and all of a sudden we heard an ominous sound, a bone-splitting crack. The branch from which the ever-boastful Thomas hung in a most precarious and foolhardy manner, giving all of us young geeks pause as well as trepidation and admiration for his God-defying act, simply broke off its trunk. At the time we probably didn't realize yet that God does not like to be defied, and the inevitable occurred. In front of our eyes, the branch, with Thomas clinging to it, landed in the deep treacherous water of the Spree.

We gaped ~~xxxxxxxxxx~~ at this scene, scared out of our wits, as Thomas gulped mouthfuls of the dirty water and yelled for help. He couldn't swim he let us know in a high-pitched scream, clawing at the water's surface as if it were able to give him sustenance, a foothold to safety, but he might as well have clawed at the air. He sank, bobbed up again, swallowed more of the filthy water, emitted more burbling yells for us to come to his aid.

After a few seconds of being literally traumatized by this life-and-death struggle for survival, we ran around like chicken without a head, shouting at him senselessly and hysterically to stay above water. A couple of boys ran for help in the densely grown patch of trees, hoping to find somebody to assist us, while the rest of us searched frenziedly for some long branches or tried valiantly to break them off the closest trees in order to extend these sticks out to Thomas, so he could grab hold at least of one of them to enable us to pull him ashore. But while we were running around, doing our juvenile best to save his life, his figure soon disappeared beneath the dark liquid grime of the river and after a minute that seemed to last an eternity Thomas had disappeared completely beneath the unforgiving surface of the river.

We simply stood there, staring in total shock at the bleak glacial top of the water that conjured up only a few tiny bubbles of air where he had sunk. And then, after a minute of being totally crippled by fear and shock, and the first encounter with death for most of us, we stood on the otherwise deserted bank of the Spree in tall verdant grass, silent and motionless, our hearts beating insanely inside our chests.

Our young minds had already informed us that our bully playmate was dead, that he had drowned, and one of my pals collapsed in the tall grass by the river and started to sob.

What were we to do now? At first total paralysis. Minutes later, a conference among us ten-year-olds, confronting death, became a stutter of hoarse whispers, then a hysterical outburst of scared shouts and tearful reproaches. All we knew was that we had to inform somebody of the tragedy that had so suddenly and unexpectedly descended upon us and clutched at our young, inexperienced

hearts, our unspoiled minds. One of us boys, we decided, should stay here, just in case Thomas would make a miraculous re-appearence, if there was a God in heaven; the rest of us would try to locate a policeman or district official, meaning anybody who struck us kids as grown up.

This time good fortune was on our side, because it took us less than ten minutes to come across a "Schupo" (traffic cop) after we had managed to find our way back to a more civilized urban area and we informed him breathlessly what had happened. But instead of coming with us, trying to find and hopefully resuscitate the missing teenager, the policeman immediately knocked at the door of the nearest house and asked the owner to use his telephone. Within minutes we heard the siren of a nautical ambulance and fire engine, but it became clear to their crews in a matter of seconds that a diver's helmet be loaded on a police motorboat that was summoned in short order and took all of us to the spot where Thomas had disappeared and our weepy friend still stood guard over his watery grave.

There appeared a great deal of commotion, shouts and arguments among the grownups until one man put on the diver's helmet and submerged himself in the spot where Thomas had vanished about half an hour earlier in the water.

We youngsters simply stood by helplessly, watching the rescue operation take its own sweet meticulous time. It probably lasted an hour or so, going through all the mandatory prescribed motions, until the diver, after half a dozen attempts into the river's depth, finally emerged with the fully clothed dripping corpse of Thomas.

I turned away as soon as I had recognized his greyish features. Long ribbons of slimy green river-weeds dangled from his

hair and his face as well as most of his Hitler Youth uniform, and finally his corpse was dumped unceremoniously into the police motorboat and taken to a morgue.

One of the cops told us to accompany them to Thomas's parents and fill them in verbally in case they had any questions about their son's demise. During that rescue operation, one of the policemen had already taken in writing a detailed account from the oldest of us boys exactly how Thomas had drowned. Plainly none of us appreciated the heartless command that we should fill in Thomas's parents in case they wanted to know more gory details about their son's death, but we were kids, some of us not even in our teens yet and scared out of our wits to disobey the police's commands.

We sat glumly, silently, in the back of what turned out to be a Black Maria, the kind of vehicle normally used for transporting criminals to jail; each of us kids was Wrapped in our own morbid thoughts of death and the impending confrontation with Thomas's parents, especially his mother.

To our relief, we found only Thomas's brusque janitor father at home - - his mother was absent visiting her parents in another part of Germany.

Herr Thomas must have guessed immediately that something serious had happened to his son when he saw the cops as well as us without the presence of Franz.

The policeman-in-charge asked him if all of us would be permitted to enter his apartment, a rather untidy lower middle-class Berlin flat of a couple of rooms smelling of peasoup.

Fortunately one of the policemen came straight to the point, not beating around the bush in a serious matter like this, and gave him the sad fact of his son's drowning straight off the bat.

Herr Thomas simply stared at the policeman, but gradually his

eyes filled with tears, rolling down his gaunt unshaven cheeks. One of my friends rosedfrom his chair and hugged the middleaged man, only to be pushed away by him in a brusque angry manner. I figured he probably wanted to be alone in his grief when he suddenly bunched his hands into fists and screamed at us boys why we had let him down and not done anything to save his son's life.

Timidly, I explained in a hoarse,tremulous whisper that none of us could swim while my friend "Atti" filled him in that it all happened so quickly,that Franz had dropped like a stone and we didn't even comprehend he was drowning (in fact, we thought he was clowning in the water) until we realized the truth, the tragic fact,when he never surfaced again.

The policeman-in-charge gestured to us that we leave the apartment since he wanted to ask Herr Thomas a few questions. Of course, we were glad to be back on the street and not to have the responsibility , the burden on our young shoulders to inform young Thomas's mother of her son's untimely death. Obviously, we did not feel like hanging around that afternoon and retired to our homes to tell our parents what had transpired. They all knew Thomas and my mother and sister were shocked by this tragic turn of events, but all of our loved ones forbade us in future to ever set foot in the Spreewald again without the surpervision of an adult.

The fact remains that I never saw the beauty of this idyllic part just outside Berlin ever again. Even today,seventy years later,whenever one of my old-time friends brings up the subject of the river Spree or the Spreewald, I still see the ghastly figure of the drowned Communist and Nazi bully Franz Thomas in my mind and cannot help feeling sorry for him.

In retrospect,it seems strange that I had actually known two Thomases in my life: The drowned and not totally unlamented Berliner (or "Piefke" as they are known in the German vernacular) Franz Thomas, and a gentle young lady, Hazel Thomas,whose acquaintance I made exactly ten years later, during the war, in the heart of London.

In 1943 I was working with Hazel - a real "Cockney" - in an office at Hutchinson's publishing company, although in all fairness it must be pointed out that her "Cockney-dom" resembled more the Eliza Doolittle at the end of "Major Barbara" than the flower-girl at the beginning of Shaw's play. Yet like Miss Doolittle (and Wendy Hiller),she also turned out to be most attractive, just about my age, twenty, and worked there as an assistant bookkeeper; but she was perennially hounded by bad luck with her choice of boyfriends. Sometimes we went out to lunch together at a local milkbar near 10 Great Queen Street, where our office was located, but nothing serious in the romantic department ever developed between us.

Yet even after I left that place of employment less than a year later, I still sent her my wartime "sweets" coupons. She craved chocolate and hard candy, which were rationed in England during and shortly after the war, and since I never cared much for candy of any sort (except for an occasional Cadbury's or Hershey's milk-chocolate bar) I always gave or mailed Hazel my "sweets" coupons after I had left Hutchinson's,and she in turn volunteered to mend my laundered socks for me which, like virtually all apparel, were also strictly rationed during the war, and without fail she would always return them to me nicely mended until the very week I left for the United States in late November 1947.

We did correspond for a few more months after my departure from Great Britain, and in her last letter to me in late 1948 she did convey the news to me that she had finally met her "dreamboat," a native of Wales, and would marry him shortly. I congratualted her after my relatively brief stint in Hollywood, sending her a picture of myself standing in front of my home at 454 No. Vista Avenue, in Beverly Hills, but I never heard from her again and can only hope that she has become a happy wife and the mother of many semi-Welsh babies.

KICKING AND SCREAMING. (1933)

Until shortly after the arrival of Adolf Hitler as chancellor of Germany in January 1933, my father had served for a dozen years or so/already as the medical doctor-in-residence at the world-renowned UFA film studios near Berlin.

It happened some time late in August of that year - about a month after my encounter/there with Germany's new Führer - when I visited my father at the studio again during the final week of my summer vacation that the inevitable disaster at long last occurred.

In spite of the red light flashing outside the studio doors, indicating that a scene was being shot inside, the filming was abruptly terminated in mid-morning when somebody beat his fists over and over against the huge sliding steeldoors and about half a dozen SS men came rushing into the studio, demanding to see the damned Jew Kuttner. Turning chalk-white, my father stepped forward and enquired what he could do for them.

The highest-ranking SS officer/among them snapped that my father obviously was trying to poison the film crew with his medications and that he immediately cease operations at UFA, leave the premises and never return to the studio or suffer the consequences.

The entire filmcrew listened in disbelief and stunned silence, but my father, knowing his business thoroughly and having been the trusted medical doctor of Germany's most famous showbusiness personalities for all these years, still tried to reason with the black-uniformed giants, explaining that he had been UFA's doctor (Vertrauensarzt) for a dozen years without ever hearing a word of complaint from anybody he had treated; moreover, that he had fought in the German army during the 1914-18 war and actually been wounded at the front in 1917 before becoming a POW in Belgium, so what was the complaint against him?

On hearing these words of explanation, one of the SS men, in retort, took one step forward and smashed his fist into my father's face, and this with such force that he staggered back against a camera, causing it to topple over and crash to the floor, with my father landing beside it. Immediately blood spurted from his nostrils onto his new pin-striped suit and on the grey silk-tie I had bought him as a birthday gift that year with some of my meager savings, soiling everything beyond repair.

Ten years old at the time, I burst into tears since I never realized that grown-ups could do that to one another and I begged the movie director, Günther Lamprecht, who had directed me about three years earlier in the film adaptation of Germany's most famous juvenile post-World-War-One novel "Emil and the Detectives," to go to my father's aid, but the director simply waved me aside, shaking all over himself, and remained rooted to the ground next to the frozen camera crew, staring helplessly at my father straggling back to his feet and then being dragged out of the studio by two of the SS officers.

I was trembling all over and almost completely blinded by my tears, but I followed the bullies helplessly into the sunlight and watched them literally throwing my father out of the sound stage, dping this with such force that he landed on the pavement outside on all his fours. Sobbing, I rushed to his aid as the studio door closed behind us and he painfully rose from the ground, dusting himself off while one of the black-uniformed SS men who had followed us shouted at him to pack his belongings and get off the lot, because Jew-bastards like him were no longer needed in Germany. We never returned to the studio, obviously.

If my darling parents had had the brains, or the foresight, this would have been the time to emigrate, hopefully to the U.S.

(In all fairness, it should be mentioned that in the mid-thirties nobody could have foreseen later political developments, neither World War II nor the Holocaust.) Even worse, Washington made it almost impossible for us at the time to immigrate, allowing only 25,000 Germans per year to enter their country, of which over half of them weren't even Jewish immigrants. Now just compare this with today's figures when the 2000 census estimates to have more than nine million illegal immigrants in the U.S. plus about one million legal ones every year - - immigrants, incidentally, for which it is not a life-or-death business to move to this country and for whom the American taxpayer is now obligated to pay their multilingual expenses, including their non-English-language naturalization tests and ceremonies, unheard-of factors even ome generation ago. The United States, since my own November 30,1953 naturalization, has changed from a land of opportunity to a country of I-wanna-have-free-services, and even debating such matters today lands the faultfinder in being accused of as an un-American right-winger.

Obviously, the world has gone truly topsy-turvy. In 2001, for instance, the U.S. limited its air strikes against Afghanistan at the outset of Ramadan in deference to Muslim sensibilities. Yet the Arabs had no compunction of launching the Yom Kippur War in 1973 against the Israelis on the holiest days of the Jews and, to top this irony, it also happened to be the Muslims' own holiest day: Ramadan. In fact, this war, which the Israelis had won, is still celebrated in Egypt today as the Ramadan War.

THE WRONG VICTIM (1934)

At the very outset as chancellor of Germany in 1933, Adolf Hitler posed worldwide as the Great Defender of Peace. Even the politician, later to become his most hated enemy, Winston Churchill, hailed Hitler at first as a man needed for an ailing German economy and a bulwark against Communism.

Moreover, Hitler wished to remove the inequities of the 1919 Treaty of Versailles and in 1934 withdrew from the ineffective League of Nations, then signed a non-aggression pact with Poland. Actually, most of the world did not care overly about the fact that the German opponents to his regime were incarcerated in jails and brandnew concentration camps, or even killed there.

Certainly I wasn't that interested in 1934 in these bother-some historical details, being only 11 years old at the time, and much too busy trying to get good grades in my Berlin school, the prestigious Bismarck Gymnasium.

Personal matters, like being on good terms with the students in my class and the playmates on my street, Berlin's Kaiser Allee (now Bundes Allee), mattered to me more than the screaming ex-corporal in his chancellery on the Wilhelmstrasse. Even though I had met Hitler and been filmed with him (see Chapter 1), what mostly stands out in my mind today is that, in 1934, there

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were two families on the floor below our Berlin apartment with whom my mother, sister and I were on very friendly terms: the Frankes and the Friedlanders. Jürgen Franke, one of my playmates, was my junior by two years, and his mother Erna Franke, a great-looking "Aryan" divorcee, was working as a nurse at Dr. Brustmann's medical office in another part of our house, in a spacious seven-room apartment in the front of the building. I virtually never had to take advantage of Dr. Brustmann's medical service since my father, Dr. Paul Kuttner, from whom my mother was divorced, continued to take care of our own health needs.

Jürgen Franke and I
Every year went with my sister Annemarie - ten years my senior - to the automobile races on Berlin's nearby racetrack, the Avus, to watch our favorites of the Mercedes-Benz and Auto Union teams win most of the races with drivers like Caracciola, Stuck, Brauchitsch, Seaman and Rosemeyer at the wheel.

The family facing the Frankes on the third floor was a middle-aged couple, the Friedlanders. Being still quite young at the time, I never displayed much interest in the conversations my mother held with any adult, so whenever Frau Friedlander or Frau Franke came up to visit my mother for coffee and cake I beat a hasty retreat to the street to play with my friends.

I did know that Frau Friedlander's husband, Siegfried, was employed at a clothing store, Israel, a couple of blocks down our street, Kaiser Allee (corner of Nürnbergerstrasse), where he worked as a salesman. Of course, sometimes on Sundays, when the store was closed, Herr Friedlander would also come up to visit us with his wife, and my mother served his favorite pastry - cream-filled Bienenstich, a specialty that is available in most German bakeries

but almost totally unknown outside Germany's borders. These Sunday afternoon Kaffeeklatch-parties had the effect of making my sister Annemarie and me quite fidgety since the subject matter of politics and old relatives did not interest us. Herr Friedländer no doubt noticed my unspoken rebellion to sit politely through these interminable get-togethers and in order to sweeten the pill of boredom he frequently came upstairs with little presents for me, at one time bringing a toy I really loved: a miniature Mercedes race car, with which I sometimes played for hours with Jürgen Franke. At that stage of my youth, it was my great dream to become a racecar driver, a dream that vanished overnight when one of my Auto Union favorites, Bernd Rosemeyer, was killed while practicing for an upcoming race in 1938.

Usually, when I came home from school in the early afternoon, I walked up the four flight of stairs to our spacious apartment, loaded with my satchel of schoolbooks, but on that particular 1934 occasion, well before I reached the third floor, where the Frankes and Friedländers lived, I heard some unfamiliar men's voices barking "Open the door!" The men were also incessantly ringing the Friedländers' doorbell and banging their fists on the front door.

A bit scared by the angry male voices and the ruckus the men were causing, I tiptoed up step-by-step, always making sure that I remained undetected. At long last, though, I got a glimpse through the balustrade of the people who were responsible for this commotion and kept watching the evolving spectacle through the staircase railing from the floor below. What I saw froze me to my hiding place: The sole cause of this disturbance turned

out to be a couple of black-uniformed SS men. Even at that time when Hitler had just come to power a year earlier, the SS was already feared by the German population as a brazen and brutal organization, making short shrift of anyone deviating from the Führer's Nazi policies. Whomever they considered to be an enemy of the state could be arrested by them without a warrant, or even killed, no questions asked. They were a law unto themselves and did not have to answer to anybody for their actions, except to Hitler and Reichsführer SS Himmler. Never in the twelve years of Nazi rule had an SS man ever been arrested or held accountable to the Third Reich for his misdeeds.

When Frau Friedländer finally opened the door, she clutched her bosom on seeing the two giant SS men confronting her. They gave the "Heil Hitler" salute and one of them told her that they had brought her husband back home from Oranienburg, the concentration camp north of Berlin, where he had been incarcerated a few months earlier.

Immediately Frau Friedländer burst into tears and thanked the two men profusely for escorting him back home to her, but when she poked her head out of the door and could not see him, she asked the two men where he was.

Instead of answering her, one of the SS men shifted the gun holster that was attached to his belt and removed a large vegetable can from his trouser pocket.

"That's where he is, Frau Friedländer," he barked at her. "Heil Hitler!"

She took the can, shaking all over and staring at it incomprehensively.

The two SS men clicked their heels, entered the waiting elevator, and disappeared laughing at a job well done.

Frau Friedländer still kept staring at the can in her trembling hands, then started to sob and finally shut the door.

I was greatly upset by this entire spectacle but could not understand how a tall grownup man could be made to fit into a medium-sized vegetable can.

I rushed up the one remaining flight of stairs to my apartment and told my mother breathlessly what I had just witnessed.

To my surprise my mother kept staring at me as if I had told her a ghost story, but then tears began to shimmer in her eyes, coursing down her cheeks, and she told me that she would explain everything later, but that I should eat my lunch, which was already waiting for me on the kitchen table, and then wash the dishes. She cleaned up her face in the kitchen sink and informed me that she would visit Frau Friedländer for some time, then instructed me to proceed with my homework.

It was a couple of hours later that my mother came back up, her eyes red from crying, and she finally gently explained to me that the Nazis had killed Herr Friedlander in Oranienburg and cremated him there.The vegetable can had contained his ashes.

It had never occurred to the Nazis that people with Jewish-sounding names could be pure Aryans, like the Friedländers.

Of course, this sort of "courteous" behavior, that the ashes of the murdered concentration camp inmates were literally handed to their next-of-kin, ceased soon thereafter, because the fatalities in those camps grew a hundred, even a thousand-fold in the next few years, meaning that thousands of Jews and other "enemies of the state" could not possibly be accomodated any longer in tincans and other receptacles and returned to their surviving families. Instead, for two or three years longer, until about 1938, relatives of the slain Nazi victims simply were

informed by pre-printed postcards that their imprisoned family member had succumbed as a result of an "accident" or his "rebelliousness" at the concentration camp.

Still later, fatalities in these camps remained unreported unless some friend or surviving family member made long enquiries at their local police station. Naturally, once mass deportations to extermination camps during World War II took effect, no further information about the fate of those being deported was ever made available to anybody at any Nazi office or police station throughout occupied Europe.

One other personal Nazi-related event occurred to me in 1934, this one shortly before my high-school summer-break.

When I first joined that school - Berlin's Bismarck Gymnasium in the Pfalzburger Strasse, which was destroyed during World War II - in 1932, I sat at my class desk right in front of a pair of twins, ten-year-old boys, who even before Hitler's appointment as Germany's chancellor in 1933 were already then members of the Nazi youth organization, the Jungvolk, and these two boys kept boasting about being the sons of Gregor Strasser, who at that time (1932) was the leader of the NSDAP (the National Socialist German Workers Party), which together with the DAF (Deutsche Arbeits Front) made membership in them for every German worker later compulsory.

But then, early in July 1934, Gregor Strasser and dozens of other Nazi leaders were executed on Hitler's personal orders during the infamous Night of the Long Knives (evidently they had attempted to seize power away from their Führer) and a day later already the two Strasser boys failed to show up in school and they were never heard of again in spite of all attempts by Dr. Voelkle, the school's superintendent, to discover the reason for their absence, and, as it proved to be later, their disappearance.

And to add irony to cynicism, in May 1949 my anti-Nazi Scandinavian Berlin schoolmate, Bernd Danielsen, informed me by letter that Dr. Voelkle had actually had to serve for a brief time as the commandant of a small concentration camp in Nazi-occupied Europe in his late fifties and had either committed suicide or, more likely, beem killed as a member of the hastily arranged "Volkssturm" of citizens, ordered by Himmler to defend Berlin against the Soviets in the final days of the war.

That news reached me the same day that I learned of another suicide: this one relating to a man whose hand I had shaken, but in this case several months earlier, in 1948, when I had attended an English-Speaking Union dinner given in his honor at the Waldorf-Astoria: James Forrestal, America's first Secretary of Defence.

But what impresses me to this day is that my Berlin classmates never once assailed or insulted me or even ostracized me for not being one of them - "an Aryan." In fact,long after World War II,in 1992,I did attend the only class-reunion meeting of my life (with my son Stephen),namely at the home of one of my best schoolfriends, Klaus Brockerhoff,who owned a beautiful villa with his goodnatured wife Antonie in the northern German village of Kirchlinteln. And here I met some of these old classmates of the 1930s and was embraced and welcome by each one of them like a long-lost brother returning from the war.

I have corresponded with most of them since then,and although many of these loyal friends of mine,like Hasso von dem Bussche as well as Antonie and Klaus,have now passed on,I still correspond occasionally with Fritz Hellms and Erich Hirsch about seventy years after we first entered our Berlin high school together.

MY SISTER'S SEX APPEAL HIT THE WRONG TARGET. (1935)

About two years after my parents were divorced in the mid-1920s, my mother, Margarete Kuttner, my sister Annemarie and I moved from our eight-room apartment at Berlin's Regensburger Strasse 14 to a lovely five-room apartment a couple of blocks away at Kaiser Allee (now Bundes Alles) 26. My father had married again and meanwhile opened his medical practice a mile away at Kurfürstendamm 72, although he never failed to provide my mother with alimony payments and child support until the Nazi movement deprived him (1935) of his medical practice because of its outlandish anti-Semitic legislation. After the cessation of these monthly payments in 1936, my mother was compelled to rent out a couple of rooms while my sister and I continued to live comfortably with her in the other three rooms (and a balcony), a financial arrangement that was further augmented when my mother also decided to give private piano lessons.

It must be pointed out,however,that the new wife of my father did not turn out to be the evil stepmother of fairytale reputation but a truly loving woman, whose maiden name was Ida Caspar (or Kaspar). Moreover, she was Aryan who hated the Nazis and refused to divorce my father when Hitler came to power in 1933.

Under the mid-1920s divorce agreement,though, both Annemarie and I were instructed to visit our father either on Saturdays or Sundays for a few hours each week, but my sister would not at first forgive my father for deserting our mother for another woman, and until well into the 1930s she refused to visit him, while I, at the age of three, did not understand and feel yet the emotional pain inflicted upon our mother by his deserting our family.

Consequently, I was asked to abide by the law and visit my father and his new wife every week and never on those occasions did I ever hear an evil word being spoken about my mother, who equally would not say anything detrimental to me about our father and his new wife. Throughout my entire youth I felt loved by two families, although my mother at first did suffer greatly after my father had deserted her so suddenly for Ida.

It came to pass only after my father had suffered a completely disabling stroke in 1936, that Annemarie finally made up with "Vati" again, visiting him occasionally, although her loyalty to our gentle, beloved mother prevented her from ever engaging in a close emotional relationship with his second wife.

Annemarie (I always called her Annemie), who was ten years my senior - - another child of my parents died soon after its birth three years before I was born - - helped out with adding to the income of our family by training to become a dental assistant in Berlin's Wedding district after graduating from her high school and then taking off another year for mastering shorthand and typing. Meanwhile I still slaved over a thousand Latin

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verbs and Pythagoras's theorem in Berlin's Bismarck Gymnasium, where I made more friends than at any other period of my young life.

Things, though, began to change drastically throughout Germany after Hitler had come to power in January 1933. We three lived peacefully and comfortably on the fourth floor, even though I rarely used the tiny elevator with a fully loaded capacity of two people only. Although I did scratch my initials with the tip of my pen knife into the wall of that lift over fifty years later, when I paid a visit to my old Berlin apartment building, I could not trust my eyes when I discovered my initials still in that elevator since the Allied bombs evidently had missed the target of the old Kuttner residence.

What had changed drastically in 1933, was the arrival of two occupants on the fifth floor of our building, which really served more as an attic for hanging the tenants' laundry to dry out and a storage compartment for each tenant who preferred to keep their suitcases and other paraphernalia in these small partitions rather than having the items clog up and obstruct their apartments. For some reason, the building's management had made space for a married couple, converting a few of these compartments into a two-room flat with all the modern facilities imaginable at very little expense to the new tenants. And it just so happened that these new tenants were a couple named Dose, with the wife a dumpy little woman in her thirties and the husband a strapping young SS Standartenführer, who was always seen wearing his black party uniform in public - plainly a proud strutting Nazi of the most Nordic type imaginable.

Like my beautiful sister Annemarie, he was still in his

twenties, but whenever I saw him on the street with his wife the couple appeared more like a Laurel and Hardy team than representatives of the new Hitlerian Herrenrasse (master race).

Whenever Herr Dose's path crossed with ours in the house or on the street, his demeanor was always very friendly and wherever he met us his salutation never brought up the "Heil Hitler" salute, but always a benign "Good Morning" or "Good Evening."

One summer Sunday afternoon something totally unexpected happened. He had rung our door bell and arrived with a freshly baked marcipane cake, a Berlin favorite. He claimed that evidently he had bought too much cake and since there were no refrigerators at the time and he did not feel like wasting the cake he was wondering whether we would be interested in sharing it with him. Apparently his wife was away on business somewhere in Germany and since my mother did not want to insult him by turning him down she let him into our apartment and volunteered to make some coffee, with all of us joining in a little Kaffeeklatsch.

All this happened well before the Nazi racial Nuremberg Laws late in 1935 and we did not feel any need to inform him at the time that we did not count as Aryans under Hitler's religious decrees. Herr Dose's visits after that initial encounter became more frequent, his friendliness unmistakably more chummy, but even though his SS uniform did rub us the wrong way we also noticed that he never broached the subject of politics. Instead, he would question me about the teachers at my school, the Bismarck Gymnasium, which he had also attended when he entered his teens, and like my sister he loved movies, so that there was always a common conversational ground

that led to hearty if not controversial opinions. SS officer Dose became a fixture in our lives and my mother and sister always reported to me how nicely and politely he behaved when I was not present while visiting my father in the neighboring Berlin district of Halensee.

But then, finally, came the dreaded Nuremberg race laws of November 14, 1935 that specifically prohibited any close relationship and marriage between Aryans and non-Aryans or Jews. In fact, within one full swoop, my entire family was not only prohibited to socialize with Aryans, but with the stroke of a Hitlerian pen we were suddenly deprived of our citizenship. We were no longer considered to be German citizens, even though our family tree could be traced back to the 18th century, around 1775, when all of our ancestors had been born and married in Germany and made their living there. Not only were we considered Jews, though some Kuttners had been baptized and confirmed, but suddenly we were stateless. Our passports were stamped with a large "J" and so were our ration cards, meaning that we were entitled to buy only on certain days of the week a fraction of the food to which the Aryan population was entitled.

When Standartenführer Dose, however, started to talk about divorcing his wife since she was even unable to bear children and he was looking for a woman who could present the Führer with the offspring he desired, even I as a 13-year-old could guess that he had my sister in mind. We had heard rumors in the house already earlier that year that in a fit of rage the Standartenführer had smashed his wife's head on the rim of their bathroom sink, knocking out most of her teeth - - a fate I did not relish for my darling sister. But then by the end of 1935, shortly after a full public disclosure of the racial Nuremberg Laws, he wondered aloud, over a Sunday coffee with my family, whether my

sister would be interested in going out with him after the divorce had become final. My mother and Annemarie were mortified, virtually tongue-tied by this proposal and visibly afraid to reveal the truth about us to him, fearing his violent temper.

Being quite immature and only 13 years old at the time, I piped up that the Führer would not look favorably on him dating my sister since we were not Aryan. The giant of an SS man asking me to repeat my statement, which I did, then turned crimson, stared at me as if I had just arrived from outer space. He got up from the dining table trembling, an instant later screamed at me that we were trying to destroy his future as one of Hitler's elite SS troops; the next second he slapped me so hard that I was literally knocked out of my chair onto the floor. Within a second my mother and sister jumped up with a cry of dismay and rushed to my aid, helping me up, and my sister, scared out of her wits and remembering the fate of Dose's wife, started to cry bitterly. Realizing the incongruity of the situation and not knowing whether to hit me again or apologize to people he now recognized in his mind as vermin and enemies of the Third Reich, SS Standartenführer Dose clicked the heels of his jackboots, saluted us with a shaky "Heil Hitler," and stomped out of the apartment. We three huddled together on our sofa, silently hugging each other, weeping.

Obviously, Dose never visited us again, but whenever we did meet him in the apartment building or elevator, except for one embarrassing occasion, (see page 19), he caused us no further trouble.

Annemarie told me after the war that he was killed near Stalingrad. Unfortunately, both of my sister's 1930s Aryan boyfriends, Paul Zinnat and Gerhard Vollmond, were also killed; however, they were murdered by the Nazis in a German concentration camp.

SOME RADIO CLASSICS. (1935)

Why is it that we remember tiny things that stick in our mind, while others, vastly more important, have evaporated forever from our subconscious?

For instance, in my own case, I can truly say that, in retrospect, hardly any stage performance ever ignited my interest in show business as much as the early 1940s wartime-variety show at the London Palladium, called "Gangway!" starring Vic Oliver, Ben Lyon and the American-born Bebe Daniels. This opulent production, which was based on their own hour-long Sunday night BBC comedy "Hi Gang!" truly helped Londoners, including me, to leap out of their bomb-crazed doldrums and was discussed Monday mornings (not at the watercoolers, which did not exist yet) during the early-morning tea-break, as was Rex Harrison and Lilli Palmer in "No Time for Comedy" on stage. Of course, other radio programs, especially the Tommy Trinder Show and ITMA (It's That Man Again) with Tommy Handley, and the incomparable Sunday night radio plays, mostly directed by Val Gielgud, the brother of Sir John, did a great deal to ease the plight of the Londoners and other city-dwellers, bombed by the Luftwaffe, when they didn't grumble about the ration-coupons that greatly limited the choice and amount of meat, candy, butter and sundry dairy products, quite apart from the bit of clothing that was available to John Q. Public.

Oddly enough, speaking for myself at least, what gave me momentary joy in Berlin before the war and a break from Nazi tyranny, was a Saturday afternoon variety broadcast from Cologne throughout most of the 1930s, headed by the three comedians Rudi Rauher, Hans Salcher and Karl Wilhelmi. That trio entertained the German nation hilariously without ever once referring to anything remotely related to the Nazi movement, something my entire family could appreciate.

In retrospect it seems strange that Hitler's Propaganda Minister, Dr. Goebbels, instilled very little Nazi propaganda into Germany's peacetime broadcasts, or even movies for that matter, and for the most part filled his radio programs with classical or light music rather than with ideological pabulum.

While I still lived in Germany, until early in 1939, my mother, sister and I continued to listen to philharmonic concerts on the radio, which our Aryan anti-Nazi lodger (a hunchback no more than five feet tall, who designed Nazi emblems and letterheads for a living) had in the room we had rented out to him, since we were forced to surrender our own radioset to the Nazi authorities after Kristallnacht (The Night of the Broken Glass) in mid-November 1938. Those broadcasts really did help us somewhat to ease our tortured existence by listening to such classical luminaries as the Berlin Philharmonic under Furtwängler (who refused to join the Nazi Party) and von Karajan (who had joined it already two years before Hitler came to power), but we also enjoyed the artistry of Norway's controversial Kirsten Flagstad, who became a favorite of Hitler before and during the war because of her unsurpassed bravura performances as a Wagnerian soprano, Italy's Benjamino Gigli as well as the world-renowned pianists Gieseking and Backhaus.

Of all the BBC wartime radio stars, I did at one time come across the popular Tommy Handley in late 1942 at, of all places, London's Great Portland Street post office. Here he was mobbed by ~~and got so angry about it, being unable to buy some stamps, as he made his wishes known over the unruly crowd of obstreperous fans, that the police had to be called in and the bobbies were compelled literally to carry him out screaming, still being deprived of buying his postage stamps.~~

the public, having been recognized as the lead of one of the BBC's favorite wartime comedy-hours ITMA (It's That Man Again) and he got so angry about it, being unable to buy some stamps, as he made his wishes known over the unruly mob of obstreperous fans, that the police had to be called in and the bobbies were compelled literally to carry him out screming his head off, still being deprived of buying his postage stamps.

Nevertheless, shortly after my arrival in the States the program that often kept me glued to my radio set in the 1950s turned out to be the Master, whose measured tone of voice and reason over the BBC I had loved since the early days of the war, especially during the Blitz, Edward R. Murrow, plus the cogent commentaries of his loyal "soldiers-in-arms," Eric Savareid, Robert Trout, Daniel Schorr and the others. But I was equally intrigued by such nocturnal 1950s radio interviewers - sometimes staying up with them until five in the morning - as Long John Nebel and his wife Candy as well as by the informative Barry Farber and the other illustrious on-the-air couple Tex McCrary and his actress-wife Jinx Falkenberg.

Also to this very day, after all these decades, I still enjoy the nocturnal talkfest entertainment provided on the radio by host Joey Reynolds or I tune in to WPAT where the indestructible Danny Stiles plays old "platters" during the night, dating back to the 1920s through 1940s as he also does on Saturdays on WNYC.

Equally I am just as fascinated by radio's knowledgable show-biz conversationalist Joe Franklin, who knows as much of a fascinating tidbit about some obscure drummer shortly after WWI or a supporting starlet of the 1930s as he does about the headliners of the 21st century and then mentions all of this on Joe Franklin's Memory Lane. There are few people quite like him and Styles.

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And there is also nobody quite like the inimitable Alistair Cooke of the "Manchester Guardian," sending out his reasoned weekly Anglo-American reports over the BBC throughout World War II and for decades thereafter, all of it in a voice both steady and reassuring, regardless of how fierce and savage the contents of these communiqués turned out to be.

These broadcasting giants finally gave birth to today's top-notch luminaries Dan Rather, Peter Jennings, Tom Brokaw, Barbara Walters, Mike Wallace, Charlie Rose, Tim Russert, Brian Williams and the rest of their magnificent crews. All of their valuable voices have taught me more about modern America (and the rest of the world) than many a scholarly volume. No wonder, documentary programs, increasingly explorative, daring and enlightening, like "60 Minutes", "Dateline" and "20/20," become more popular with each passing year. (Still I must profess to admitting that I am glad none of these outstanding programs will ever take the place (or even try to) of the "New York Times ", "The New Yorker" or "The Atlantic Monthly.")

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While these nocturnal programs can even now still inform and educate this octogenarian, equal tribute must be paid at the same time to such New York-based radio celebrities as Curtis Sliva, and the left-of-center Ron Kuby, but also to John Gambling, Don Imus, and especially to WNYC's Brian Lehrer and Leonard Lopate, whose polite inquisitiveness and incisive middle-of-the-road commentaries are lightyears removed from yesteryear's hysteria and journalistic attacks on anybody by such reportorial windbags as Walter Winchell and Westbrook Pegler.

Not even the smart conservative commentator Rush Limbaugh would ever stoop to the subterranean depths of the old Hearst McCarthyites. In fact, it's quite possible that the influential heavy-weight media like "The New York Times" and "TIME" and, of course, Ed Murrow and his disciples, have been largely reponsible for this gradual change, moving America's overheated jounalistic output for the most part to more reasonable, cooler and calmer waters during the rocky course of the last half-century.

And in their own way, people like Ted Koppel, Jack Paar, Johnny Carson, Leno and Letterman have also managed to brighten my life before I turn the lights off for the night. Unless there is something truly instructional on the History Channel. Verily, I feel terribly spoiled. But so be it.

SIGNING AND SLAPPING. (1936)

Oddly enough, August 1936 turned out to become a cynically joyful time even for Jews in Hitler's Berlin; at least a little breath of fresh air for them, devoid of racial discrimination. It happened to be the time of the Berlin Olympic Games, when the Nazis tried to display their best face to the world, and my mother, sister and I visited the Olympic Stadium especially erected for this festive occasion while some friends and I, at other times, occasionally posted ourselves outside the hub of Berlin's West End, the Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, in order to garner as many signatures of the various Olympic teammates as possible. These contestants and sightseers wore large identification badges in their lapels, and one hot summer afternoon. Annemarie, my friend Atti and I were attracted by a huge, most enthusiastic crowd in front of the church (which was destroyed in World War II, but its ruin is still standing intact today as a warning to belligerent future generations), mobbing a most handsome, smartly dressed man of color: the African-American Jesse Owens, who turned out to be the hero of those Games.

It took Annemarie and me about twenty minutes to finally end up with his autograph, which I showed off later to my schoolfriends and teachers, one of whom - Dr. Huber, my French teacher - offered me, before going home, a five-Mark piece for the autograph, an enormous amount in those days for any youngster, but which I turned down, explaining that even at the age of thirteen I had made up my mind to keep Mr. Owen's autograph for the rest of my life. Although each class period in school started with the obligatory "Heil Hitler" salute, Dr. Huber was known as a most unenthusiatic follower of the Nazi movement and even refused to wear the swastika badge in his lapel, like all the other teachers, so I was sorry in a way to turn him down. After the war I learned from

my classmate Klaus Brockerhoff that Dr. Huber had been killed in an airraid on Berlin during the war, but that he had confided to Klaus in the early 1940s, after the raids on Berlin had started, how much he envied me in getting out of Berlin, out of Nazi Germany, probably not realizing at the time that I,too,was being subjected at the time by Luftwaffe airraids on London.

With regard to the Owens autograph, I had taken it with me to England in 1939 and was dumb enough to show it off in my public school in Dorset early in 1940 to a few of my schoolmates, one of who actually kissed the signature while another one by the name of Lockhart, an outspoken Nazi sympathizer and anti-Semite (the only one in that English school), bunched it up and tossed it into the roaring flames of our class's commonroom fireplace. It proved to be the only time in my English schooldays that I had a most terrible fight with one of my fellow students. Lockhart weighed about two hundred pounds as opposed to my hundred and twenty pounds and he whipped me thoroughly, giving me a bloody nose and black eye while screaming at me that I was a kike. That did not offend me at all since, at the time, I did not understand the meaning of this curseword. Only later that year, when I was interned as an "enemy alien" by the British government did I find out from one of the Tommies guarding us in Worcester what kike meant. Even though I had not hurt Lockhart very much, I am still proud of that fight. As a matter of fact, together with the Jesse Owens autograph,he had also destroyed another signature I owned, that of Germany's best-known radio pianist Herbert Jäger, who could be heard every day from 2-3 in the afternoon on a station called the Deutschland-Sender. I always listened to him during my homework in the 1930s.

Just a week after the 1936 Berlin Games came to a close,I paid a visit to my grandmother in Hamburg and had a less felicitous

occasion there to celebrate, but one that I will remember for the rest of my life.

By that time I was thirteen years old and still enjoyed delivering groceries from Reinhold Bruhn's local fruit and vegetable store, carrying them in medium-sized wicker baskets to local customers and proudly ending up with an occasional tip of a five-Pfennig piece. (Almost seventy years later, I still own a photo of me as a twelve-year-old boy carrying a number of these loaded baskets to neighborhood clients.)

One of these customers happened to be a nonegarian lady, Frau Obermayer, who insisted on being addressed as "Frau Oberstleutnant Obermayer." Her husband who had been killed In World War One happened to be an Oberstleutnant (Lieutenant-colonel), and one day while delivering the produce to her and giving her the appropriate change of a few coins, I made the unfortunate mistake of addressing her as "Frau Oberleutnant Obermayer," omitting accidentally the letters "st" from the military rank of her late husband, not realizing that this happened to be quite a few ranks lower (First lieutenant) than her husband's rank of "Oberstleutnant."

Two seconds later, the full not inconsiderable force of her hand landed on the left side of my face, actually with such a wallop that I staggered back and a dozen coins in my hand scattered all over the floor in front of her door.

Shocked and contrite as the pre-adolescent boy I was brought up to be in Germany,I begged her pardon and asked whether I might be permitted to take her photograph next afternoon. She drew herself up rigidly stiff in the best backboned Prussian "Oberstleutnant" manner and told me to report for this snapshot-session the next day at 3 p.m.sharp. Somehow I wanted to add this lady to the gallery in my photo album of people I utterly disliked, and in that

rogues' section Frau Oberstleutnant Obermayer was to hold a place of honor.

The following afternoon, at three sharp, I reported to her. To my surprise she had changed her usual attire from a long, black, unadorned mourning dress, as did befit this ninety-year-old upper-class widow, to a rhinestone-bejewelled, white gown, ankle-length, belted tightly around her waist and, to top it all, she had added to her grey neatly coiffed hair a tiara of glittering jewels and to her feet a pair of well-polished brown pumps.

I asked Frau Oberstleutnant politely to step outside and with my Agfa box camera finally took her photo, which after it had been developed I gave to her while I kept a copy of it for my records in my rogues-gallery album. (In it I kept fellow students, teachers and relatives I disliked.) She appeared very pleased with my photographic effort in the then-usual black-and-white reproduction and handed me a piece of hard candy. I thanked her in some exaggerated manner, which she haughtily dismissed, and went on delivering groceries.

It should come as no surprise that I was terribly shocked to see a crowd of officials from the Hamburg police department entering her ground-floor apartment the next day. Nobody, of course, would pay any attention to me, but my grandmother made immediate enquiries and learned that she had died in her sleep during the night. It was her cleaning lady who had discovered her dead in bed that morning.

Somehow I could not bring myself to consume the candy she had offered me and I took it with me back to Berlin, where I kept it among my schoolbooks until I discovered it accidentally a day or two before I departed for England several years later..

The back of our apartment building there in the Kaiser Allee sported

a large yard and plot overgrown with weeds - - some greenery, including lots of nettles, that I had always taken pleasure in seeing for its growth, especially during the summer months - - and that is the place where, the day before I left for England in February 1939, I buried Frau Oberstleutnant Obermayer's ~~xxx~~ rock-candy as well as the photo in an empty shoe carton as a sort of an ersatz coffin.

I had never forgotten the exact location, where I did bury this "treasure," and on my first visit back to Berlin in the 1980s I made it a point to dig up the place, where I had hidden it, but on my arrival there I was deeply disappointed to see that the entire yard had been paved over with concrete, and even today I am still wondering whether anybody had ever discovered my two mementoes and kept puzzling over their meaning and provenance.

In retrospect, I do consider it strange, though, that the tiny elevator in our old, undamaged building still barely revealed my initials that I had scratched on one of its interior walls with my penknife over half a century earlier in the 1930s.

CREMATED FOR THE WEDDING. (1936)

Some memorable events in a person's life may have been of a short duration, lasting only for an hour, even a few minutes.

In my case, a handful come to mind, like for instance the case of Brigitte Lenkheit, one of my sister Annemarie's school friends. Brigitte was a stunningly beautiful woman in the 1930s, around 24 years old, and she was hired as the saleslady in the showcase store of Vademecum, the Swedish toothpaste and toileteries manufacturer on Berlin's Fifth Avenue, the Kurfürstendamm near the much photographed Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, the hub of the capital's commercial district.

Annemarie and I visited Brigitte frequently at the store and without fail she always sent us back home loaded with free samples of toothpaste, soap, bath- salts and oils. Moreover, she lived only a block from us on the Kaiser Allee, and on Sunday mornings she gave free gymnastic lessons in the apartment she shared with her parents to a few youngsters, including me.

Even though I was only 13 years old at the time in late 1935, I had my first crush on a woman, seeing her in her tights, demonstrating the physical exercises to us youngsters. In fact, I liked her so much that whenever she visited us on a Sunday, I made it a point to see my father on those particular weeks on a Saturday so I could partake in the harmless coffee-and-cake sessions with her and my family. Even though she knew about our non-Aryan background, she would never bring up any political subject matter in our conversations, being much more interested in discussing her love affair with a young lieutenant in the newly-formed Wehrmacht, a person I had never met.

For the Christmas holidays of 1935 I went to visit my grandmother in Hamburg when, not so unexpectedly, my mother and sister called us from Berlin

on December 31 to wish us a happy New Year. On that occasion Annemarie, my sister, told me that she and my mother had been invited to Brigitte's wedding on New Year's Day 1936 and the reception afterwards at the Café Kranzler on the Kurfürstendamm. Actually, Annemarie was supposed to attend Brigitte's pre-wedding party that evening at Brigitte's home, but because of a pretty severe cold my sister had decided to go to bed early that night to be fresh and full of vim and vigor for the next day's wedding party. I even promised my mother to call Brigitte at her apartment on January 1,1936 after the church-wedding ceremony and before the reception at Kranzler's, but to my surprise I had a call from Annemarie again around ten in the morning of New Year's Day, in which I was informed that Brigitte's future husband and Brigitte had taken a drive to Wannsee outside Berlin in the late afternoon of December 31 to pick up some friends for the pre-wedding celebration when their car slid on the icy highway, smashing headlong into a telephone pole, burst into flames and both Brigitte and her husband were burned to death.

Annemarie and my mother were heartbroken as was I, and yet I thanked God that my sister was still nursing her cold at home since the couple had invited her to drive with them to Wannsee, or she would have been incinerated and also become a victim of this tragic accident.

For me it was a strange and exhilirating feeling to realize that my wonderful sister was very much alive, but likewise a horrible acknowledgment of the fact that this lovely and decent young woman I was incredibly fond of had been burned to a cinder with the man she loved.

It was the only time in Berlin my youth that I cried both from happiness that my sister was safe and alive and from sadness that I

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It was the only time in my Berlin youth that I cried both from happiness that my sister was safe and alive and from sadness that I

had lost forever my first love.

I insisted (and succeeded) on persuading my grandmother that I take the train back home to Berlin the next day to attend the funeral with my family,which I did. There must have been close to a hundred mourners from both lovers' families on that sad occasion, but what I remember most distinctly from the church service was the fact that the organist played the waltz from "Der Rosenkavalier," Brigitte's favorite tune, which she frequently put on the grammophone while giving us youngsters her gymnastic lessons. This tune, more than the church service, brought tears to my eyes,and almost seventy years later I can still see her in her tights demonstrating the most convoluted physical exercises.

HIT BY A NAZI BIGWIG. (1936)

Just about the time of the summer 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin, I had the only automobile accident of my life. At the time I was 13 years old, and like most German boys my age I loved to play soccer with neighborhood kids.

One afternoon, after I had completed my school homework, a few boys and I had our usual afternoon soccer game on the sidewalk in front of my house (Kaiser Allee 26), and as was the unfortunate habit of most children my age, I too ran after the soccer ball that had been kicked too far and landed on the other side of the busy street. Halfway across the street I was struck by a car, a large black Mercedes. I distinctly remember the sickening sound of the squeal of tires as the driver applied the brakes to avoid hitting me. He did not quite succeed, but his automobile (license plate: 1A-126) had managed to reduce its speed to such an extent that its collision with me was minimal and only knocked me over, giving me no more than a few blue spots on my right leg and a bloody knee.

Still, the damage was done. I lay there on the road, both in shock and in pain, and the chauffeur of the Mercedes jumped out of the car, asking me if I was hurt. I was and said so but miraculously managed to get back on my feet, rubbing my injured knee. Then the man in the back seat of the Mercedes-Benz got out and I had a worse shock than what the accident had done to me physically. It was Dr. Robert Ley, the Nazi leader of the Deutsche Arbeitsfront (DAF - - the German Workers Party), which had replaced all the trade unions in Nazi Germany and to which all workers in Nazi Germany had to belong and pay their monthly dues.

Its headquarter was located right next door to where I lived with my mother and sister. Dr. Ley was a squat little man, who was known to drink heavily and had married a German movie star, always wearing his Nazi Brown Shirt uniform. I had seen him many times before since his office was located at Kaiser Allee 25, and he probably recognized me too.

As I painfully clambered back to my feet, he appeared seriously concerned about my welfare and asked me if I was hurt, just like his chauffeur. I confirmed his suspicions, patting my bruised and bloody kneecap. Then he wanted to know where I lived and I pointed to the apartment building across the street.

He exchanged a few hasty words with his driver, took me by my hand and told me to take him to my parents. On the way across the street I explained to him that my parents were divorced and that I lived just with my mother and sister. As luck or misfortune would have it, on that particular day our elevator did not work and both he and I had to laboriously climb the four flights of stairs to my apartment. I was in pain, he was fat, and we struggled slowly up the staircase, stopping exhaustedly or painfully on each floor, talking about my schoolwork and sundry non-political items like the Olympic Games, which had upset Dr.Ley since the German longjumper Lutz Long had not succeeded in defeating the African - American Jesse Owens.

Finally we reached my floor and it so happened that the SS man who had tried to romance my sister Annemarie (a year or so earlier) was waiting on our floor,punching the button for the elevator. Dr. Ley informed him out of breath that the elevator didn't work. Dose, the SS man, stared at the Nazi leader in my company as though seeing a ghost. I greeted SS Standartenführer Dose

with a triumphant grin - - a sort of revanchist attitude for his own behavior when he had struck me in the face with such force that I had been knocked out of my chair the year before - - then told him that Dr. Ley was a good friend of mine, which must have pleased the Nazi leader since he confirmed my statement to Dose with a loud chuckle and a "Heil Hitler" that dismissed the SS man. Plainly confused by this remark from one of Hitler's closest allies, Dose descended the staircase in a visibly upset state of mind.

But if the Standartenführer was upset, the look on my mother's face as she opened the door and saw me in the company of Dr. Ley registered not only surprise but shock and fear. You could see the blood drain from her face as she clutched her heart: one of my knees badly bloodied and me holding the hand of one of the most famous Nazi leaders.

In a few words, Dr. Ley explained to my mother what had happened, but he quickly added that I was in good shape and should be more careful in the future when playing on the street. It happened to be a hot summer's day and he asked my mother if he could trouble her for a glass of water. Naturally my mother did not have the temerity to keep Dr. Ley outside waiting in the hallway like a beggar and she asked him to come into the apartment so he could at least sit down. Dr. Ley accepted the invitation with pleasure and she guided him into my room, where she served him with a bottle of Liebfrauenmilch wine that she had kept in the pantry. Her hands were trembling since she was visibly afraid of the Nazi leader, but just the opposite effect did result when he took my mother's hand and kissed it gratefully for being such a thoughtful host. And as he drank glass after glass, talking incessantly about his hard job next door [illegible], he suddenly became aware

of the photo on the wall, depicting three men in their S.A. Nazi uniforms, which I had hung in my room because one of the men happened to be my Latin and Greek teacher; evidently his profile best symbolized the pure Aryan heritage. Naturally we did not explain the true reason to Dr. Ley for hanging the picture in my room, but he was doubly pleased that we had hung such Nordic types in our apartment and then asked me whether I was a member of the Hitler Youth. I lied to him that I was, but that my uniform was at the cleaners.

Again he kissed my mother's hand when the bottle was finished and admonished me once more to be more careful when playing on the street. At the door, before leaving and walking down the four flights of stairs, he simply said "Auf Wiedersehen," not "Heil Hitler", yet he seemed so unsteady on his legs that I offered to accompany him downstairs, but he declined my helpful proposal and vanished from our lives. Perhaps the word "vanish" is a misnomer since I did continue to see him many times when returning home from school and we always waved to each other.

After Dr. Ley had left our apartment, my mother was still so stupefied by this encounter that she simply pulled me to her bosom and hugged me in the dark corridor after we had bid Dr. Ley adieu, and only then did she become aware of my wounded knee and proceeded to wash it. However, the next day she berated me for my carelessness in running after the ball and being hit by the car. In fact, she would not let me play outside for a whole week, which broke my heart, but at least it had the advantage of serving as a good lesson to me in being more careful before crossing a street.

From a historical point of view, it must be added that Dr. Ley was seized by the Allies after the war, but shortly before

the Nuremberg trials started he committed suicide by hanging himself in his cell, some say with his long underwear.

Oddly enough, that same year, in December 1936, I saw another of the Nazi bosses, Dr. Joseph Goebbels, Hitler's Propaganda Minister.

He was standing at the street corner where my father lived, Kurfürstendamm 72, and was busy collecting money for the Nazi WHW (Winter Hilfs Werk), allegedly funds for impoverished Germans in winter, although most of it was secretly diverted to the armament and munition industries. It was a snowy cold day and the mob of excited Berliners, attracted by his presence, lured me on the balcony, where as a young teen I somehow found myself unaccountably crying out to him: "Yoo-hoo, Herr Doktor!"

He looked up, laughed and waved to me, then shouted something back I could not understand over the noisy multitude of people encircling him, and I returned to the warm comfort of my father's apartment.

WHEN GÖRING FORGOT TO SAY "HEIL HITLER!" (1936)

Almost exactly three years after I had my involuntary encounter with Hitler at the age of ten, I had a strange experience with Hermann Göring, who at the time was the most powerful man in Nazi Germany after his Führer: Reich Minister for Air Service (meaning for the most part the new Luftwaffe), Prussian Minister President and Minister of the Interior.

In 1936, my father, Dr. Paul Kuttner, who lived with his second wife Ida at Kurfürstendamm 72, where he practiced medicine, had suffered a stroke at the age of 58, which incapacitated him completely, laming his entire right side. One of his best friends, Professor Gorbandt, an Aryan and the head surgeon of the Augsburg Sanatorium in Berlin, insisted that he be a patient in his hospital until he was halfway ambulatory again. I visited him in the hospital after school almost every day, although on a few occasions that summer my sister Annemarie and I (once with my mother) caught a few sports events at the new Olympic Stadium during the 1936 summer Games, at one time actually watching the documentary filmmaker and actress Leni Riefenstahl direct a track-and-field event starring Jesse Owens with her large filmcrew. After the Olympics, however, my visits to the sanatarium became quite frequent, with the result that I became really chummy with the nurses and medical doctors there. Working as dental assistant already at the age of 23, Annemarie could visit him only on weekends with me.

Feeling that it would get him preferential treatment in this non-Jewish establishment, my father insisted despite his precarious condition that he wear his Iron Cross First Class (which he had won as the medical doctor of a German division in

World War I) on his hospital pajamas. I was 13 years old at the time and cringed with embarrassment at this ridiculous display. Nevertheless, I continued to read the main events in the daily newspapers to him since the stroke tragically had incapacitated him to read on his own or even to hold a newspaper. Also, one of my assignments was to feed him his dinner at night, which usually took place at six p.m., after which I bade him farewell until the following day.

However, one day in the late summer, when visiting my father, I noticed a huge crowd on arrival in front of the hospital. After worming my way through the enthusiastic mob, I entered the elevator and asked its operator, who always took me to the fourth floor, where my father had his private room, why there were so many people on the street. Before he had a chance to answer, hordes of people behind me started to shout: "Heil! Heil!" I turned around and to my astonishment saw none other than Hermann Göring in civvies - - actually a dark-green hunting outfit - -smilingly enter the hospital with an SS aide by his side.

The two stepped into the waiting elevator where I was speaking to the operator, and we four were on our way up. Halfway up, fate would have it that the elevator got stuck between two floors, which it had never done before. The operator broke into a sweat and furiously began to manipulate the old-fashioned crank. The elevator would not budge. The SS bodyguard also became a bit unhinged, not knowing how to react since there were no visible saboteurs around. Being quite young, I started to giggle at this odd stroke of fate. Göring turned around, becoming aware for the first time of my presence. He did not seem to be worried at all about the elevator's misfunction and asked

me why I was here. I told him I was visiting my father. He informed me he was paying a visit to his sick cousin and for a couple of minutes or so we exchanged harmless pleasantries while his aide and the elevator operator were cursing each other.

Suddenly the elevator gave a deep sigh and it started to move again. However, as we got off the fourth floor, Göring steered me by the shoulders ahead of him onto the corridor on which 20 - 30 nurses and doctors had lined up, facing each other and giving the Nazi salute. Like a newly-wed couple, we walked under this "roof" of Nazi-saluting medics until I reached my father's room. Göring's cousin rested in the room next door and we parted ways.

I told my father breathlessly what had happened and suddenly, after about half an hour, Göring stood in the open doorway to my father's room, smiling in his green hunter's uniform. He knocked at the door and entered the room, telling my shocked father about our experience in the elevator and that he was glad to have made my acquaintance. I explained to Göring that my father had difficulty speaking because of his stroke, but it happened at that instant that Göring became aware of the Iron Cross my father was wearing on his hospital pajamas.

Göring broke into a wide grin and asked me why he was wearing the medal in bed. Naturally I could not confide to him that the purpose behind this conduct was to receive better treatment in the hospital as a non-Aryan. Instead,I explained to the Minister President that my father was incredibly proud of his exploits in the German army during the war and wanted everybody to know in the hospital that he loved Germany. Immediately the medal-loving Göring grabbed my father's right paralyzed hand and squeezed it warmly,

realizing at once that he had grasped his icecold lifeless hand, and he turned to me to ask whether my father could feel anything in his right hand. I told him that his entire right side had been affected by the stroke and that he appeared to me to be only as half-alive as the German soldiers who had come under his care in the war. Göring then asked me what his rank was at the end of the 1914-1918 war and I told him that he had been an Oberstabsarzt (medical-doctor-in-charge of a German division) until he was made a P.O.W. in Belgium. This time Göring grabbed my father's left hand and shook it, telling him that he would soon improve.

My father nodded and instead of saluting Göring with the customary "Heil Hitler!" he said "Auf Wiedersehen."

Göring simply continued to smile and, without batting an eye, also said: "Auf Wiedersehen, Herr Doktor!", probably the only time that he gave this farewell salutation during the entire Nazi period. Next, he grabbed my shoulders, squeezed them in a comradely fashion, saying nothing, not even "Heil Hitler!" and left the room with his beaming SS bodyguard.

Almost seven years later, in October 1943, the Nazis were responsible for my father's murder in the Czech concentration camp of Theresienstadt (Terezin). Like the rest of my family, he and my mother (gassed in Auschwitz) are listed, however, in the Berlin Memorial Book of Jewish and non-Aryan Victims of National Socialism as well as in many new institutions in the United States and Europe. Moreover, the Jewish Museum in Berlin is permanently exhibiting a towel my mother had washed and ironed for me the day before I fled Nazi Germany for England with a Kindertransport in 1939. Her fingerprints, and the soapflakes she had used, deliberately have never been washed out of that towel!

A DANGEROUS RELIGIOUS SERVICE. (1937)

Undoubtedly, the most prominent Protestant German anti-Nazi clergyman in the Third Reich, a man who also helped German Jews during the Nazi period, was Dr. Martin Niemöller. His autobiography "Vom U-Boot zur Kanzel" (From the U-boat to the Pulpit), about his experiences during World War I and thereafter, was banned in Nazi Germany but after World War II became a best-seller in West Germany.

In the summer of 1937, he conducted a divine service in Berlin's Hohenzollernplatz Kirche, a reasonably new church a couple of blocks from where I lived with my mother and sister, and since we knew that he always gave sermons critical of Hitler and his government policies, my mother, sister and I tried to attend the well-publicized church service - - not advertized in state public organs like newspapers and on the radio, but by word of mouth and leaflets pushed during the night under the doors of neighboring private homes, ours included.

However, because of the overflow of the congregation, not only of Protestants but Jews and Catholics as well, we could not gain entry into the church and were told by the ecclesiatical staff that Dr, Niemöller had agreed to repeat his sermon later that afternoon. When we came back at the appointed hour for the repeat sermon, the crowd was even larger. Still, we managed to push our way through the tightly packed excited throng outside but only succeeded in ending up at the foot of the wide red-brick staircase leading into the church. And since - - for this second sermon - - somebody had meanwhile installed a public address system outside that entrance of the church, his sermon could at least be heard on the sun-drenched Berlin street.

Seconds after Dr. Niemöller had ended his second sermon, a few trucks loaded with dozens of Hitler Youth boys came to a

screeching halt in front of the house of worship and the uniformed teenagers jumped out, raced up the church steps, and just as Dr. Niemöller and the first of the worshippers emerged from the church, they grabbed him by the arms in his religious garb and arrested him for his anti-Hitler "diatribe."

Sometimes it has been reported in the past that the Protestant preacher was arrested by the Gestapo at his own church in the Berlin suburb of Dahlem, but it was actually here that he was arrested and never again released by the Nazis from the Sachsenhausen and (later) Dachau concentration camps until the Allies liberated him there in 1945 at the end of World War II. (Earlier, in Dahlem, he was also briefly arrested by the Gestapo.)

One interesting sidelight is that the Hitler Youth member who grabbed him by one of his arms and steered him to the waiting police patrol car happened to be a former classmate of mine, Alfred Perschke. Perschke started out as a meek youth, actually an orphan, who was adopted by the caretaker of a local girls school, where he finally trained himself to boss and bully the girls to such an extent that the Hitler Youth accepted him with open arms and promoted him to a high rank, although it was the Gestapo that instructed him and other loyal members of his outfit to perform some of the dirtier aspects of Nazi policies, such as the abovementioned arrest and smashing, with impunity, the windows of Jewish stores during the Night of the Broken Glass (Nov. '38). Eight years after the Niemöller incident, I was told by another Berlin schoolfriend of mine, Perschke had been killed by the Russians in the Volkssturm while defending the Nazi capital in the closing days of World War II.

Dr. Niemöller had been arrested once before, earlier in 1937, and fined 2000 Marks for "Underhand attacks against the State," even spending a few months on that occasion already in a concen-

tration camp. Nevertheless, it was after the Hohenzollernplatz church service that Martin Niemöller ended up in Dachau before being liberated there by the Allies eight years later. An order by Dr.Goebbels shortly before the end of the war to have him executed was disobeyed by somebody at Dachau. Until 1964, he served as the President of the Protestant church in Hessen and Nassau, Germany.

Another anti-Nazi Protestant clergyman, who actually was the regular pastor at the Hohenzollernplatz church and had been arrested by the Gestapo for his sermons critical of Hitler, Eduard Lindenmeyer, and who was liberated by the Allies in Dachau at the end of the war, like Niemöller, evidently wanted desperately that the Western powers liberate and occupy West Germany, in particular West Berlin, but when he realized late in April 1945 that the atheistic Soviets were about to capture Berlin (being unaware that a short time later the British army would occupy his district in Berlin), he went up to the top of the church's scarely built steeple, to the very belfry, and hurled himself to his death.

Just a few days after Niemöller's arrest by the Hitler Youth in 1937, my schoolmates and I were instructed by our Nazi headmaster, Dr. Voelkle, to cheer Hitler and Mussolini on their triumphant automobile ride through the streets of Berlin.

HITLER'S PHOTO DID THE TRICK. (1938)

About half a year before the Night of the Broken Glass (Kristallnacht of November 9-10, 1938), the purpose of which was to compel the German and Austrian Jews to seriously consider leaving the Third Reich, I fell sick with the flu and had to stay home from my Berlin school, the Bismarck Gymnasium on Pfalzburger Strasse, and rest for a couple of days in bed.

To make ends meet, my mother had to give private piano lessons and rent out two of our five rooms. One of our lodgers was a Fräulein Müller, a single woman in her thirties, who worked next door to us at Kaiser Allee 25, the headquarters of the German Nazi Labor Front (Deutsche Arbeits Front - DAF), which all German laborers had to join.

At around noon that late-April day in 1938, the front-door bell rang and seconds later my mother entered my room, white as a sheet. She was accompanied by two men in civvies with their obligatory swastika badges in their lapels, and with Fräulein Müller, who usually never came home for lunch. The men in their early forties introduced themselves to me as members of the secret police (Gestapo) and informed me that Fräulein Müller had overheard me the previous day in the evening saying nasty things about the Führer to my mother, and since Fräulein Müller was Aryan, while I was not, they knew that she spoke the truth.

Of course, I was scared to death and stammered feverishly that Fräulein Müller must have misunderstood what she had overheard. Naturally, the lady in question assured the two men that she had not, and the two Gestapo officers demanded that even as a non-Aryan I prove to them that I did not harbor any ill feelings toward the Führer. My mother asked them how I could prove such a thing when the

matter centered merely on one person's verbal testimony against a boy's who was only 15 years old and often made immature statements. One of the men replied that it was illegal to make statements critical of the Führer regardless of age, that indeed Adolf Hitler was a Savior bestowed upon the German people by the Almighty.

While the two men of the Gestapo, which was known for its lack of a sense of humor, continued to spout their brainwashed propaganda, I racked my brain desperately for a way out of this unfunny predicament when my eyes suddenly alighted on a picture I had hung on the wall a couple of years earlier during the 1936 Olympic Games in Berlin. Actually,it was a photo of three members of the SA, SS and Hitler Youth. The reason I had hung this photo in my room was not because I admired these destructive organisations of the Nazi state, but because the SA man on the picture happened to be my Latin and Greek teacher, and Dr. Goebbels's Ministry of Propaganda had selected him for this portrait because of his truly Nordic-looking "Aryan" profile, a matter that did not exactly endear me to that man, Dr. Schwertfeger, but who nevertheless proved to be an excellent teacher and who never in any way discriminated against me in class, although he knew about my non-Aryan heritage.

Without giving the Gestapo officers the true reason for my hanging this particular picture on the wall, I asked them whether an anti-Nazi, or somebody critical of the "beloved" Führer, would want to hang a Nazi picture symbolizing the strength of the Nazi Party in his bedroom. The two Nazi officers nodded in agreement after studying the photo of the three Nordic-type men, but the so-far silent plainclothesman now told me that even if I liked Nordic types, I could still have criticized the Führer.

Was there anything else by which I could prove that I harbored no illwill toward the "Savior of the Nation", he demanded.

And this time God and Hitler himself must have come to my rescue. I assured the men that I worshipped the Führer.

Prove it, they challenged me again. And this time I pointed to my study desk. A week earlier my class had been given an assignment by our history teacher to make up a picture essay of the Führer's life, and since newspapers and magazines in Nazi Germany, especially in Berlin, always showed photos of Hitler in their pages, I had already cut out between thirty and forty Führer photos now and explained to the Gestapo officers that Hitler's pictures always inspired me to such an extent that I habitually removed these reproductions from newspapers and magazines and eventually planned to paste them into a special album just as I did with my family photos. In other words, I demanded to know, how could I have spoken ill of such a man?

The two men studied each of the pictures, which by the nature of its subject matter must have appeared sacrosanct to them, then retired to a corner of my room and whispered to one another for a couple of minutes. Finally, they returned to my bed and, instead of addressing me, they turned to my mother and instructed her to give notice to Fräulein Müller, who had witnessed the entire proceedings in silence, to avoid future misunderstandings.

Squeezing an unexpected ounce of human goodness out of his brainwashed cerebrum, one of the Gestapo officers patted my cheek in a comradely fashion and wished me a speedy recovery. By week's end, my mother had rented out Fräulein Müller's room to an elderly, hunchback, Herr Bültmann, who designed Nazi-governmental letterheads for a living, but who confessed to us after the Kristallnacht how much he detested the Nazis and their policies. He wept when I emigrated to England in 1939.

What concerns Fräulein Müller, God knows what happened to her. But somehow, in retrospect today, I am perfectly aware of the fact that I barely managed to escape the fate that was to await Anne Frank years later when she had to contend with her own "Fräulein Müller."

Because only in the year 2002 it had finally been established that this young teen (and her family) had most likely been betrayed by a woman, Lena Hartog, a cleaning lady, who feared reprisal against her own husband if Anne's hiding place in the attic was to be discovered. (Other sources meanwhile maintain that it may also have been one of Otto Frank's associates, Anton Ahlers, a committed Nazi, who had betrayed the Frank family to the Gestapo for the few guilders paid to anybody exposing Jews hiding from deportation in Holland.)

POTATOES DIDN'T INTEREST THE GESTAPO. (1938)

During most of my summer and winter school vacations in the 1930s I travelled from Berlin to Hamburg to visit my maternal grandmother, Marie Fraenkel (killed in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1943). Her husband, Professor Eugen Fraenkel, had been Germany's most renowned pathologist and the discoverer of the "Gasbrand" (gangrene) bacillus in World War I. He died in 1925. Today, a street in Hamburg is named after him and a large wall relief of his profile was created in his honor in that city's largest hospital, the Eppendorf Hospital, after a bust of him was stolen by neo-Nazis there in the 1980s.

Much to my family's chagrin, (because he was Jewish,) his gravesite had been desecrated during World War II by the Nazis in Hamburg's largest cemetery in Ohlsdorf by the removal of a large boulder in which his name had been engraved; instead, the Nazis had planted shrubbery over his grave and those of two of my cousins who had both died of diphtheria in the late 1920s.

I always liked to visit this gravesite in the 1930s because of the beauty and peacefulness of this location, and my postwar discovery of the Nazis' desecration and destruction around 1940 of this final sacred resting place upset me greatly, even though the Nazis forgot to eradicate their names from the cemetery's register of graves, where the Fraenkels' names and other statistics remain inviolate to this day.

While on my last Hamburg vacation in Nazi Germany in 1938, when I was 15 years old, I volunteered to help out (without pay, of course) in the local grocery store owned by Reinhold and Irma Bruhn, as had been my habit for half a dozen years. In the mornings, I carried the produce in wicker baskets to the apartments of the neighborhood tenants who had ordered the groceries after

Reinhold had earlier made his daily rounds to his customers and taken their orders. At the end of the mornings, I handed the collected money for the food items they had purchased to the Bruhns and in the afternoon I helped out selling the produce in their store. Or I assisted them in preparing their own home-made jams and filling up the hundreds of glass jars with this produce, all of which gave me great pleasure in the healthy atmosphere of this largest harbor town in Germany.

Although the Bruhns knew I was not "Aryan," I had become such a fixture at the store during my 1930s vacations that they loved having me work for them, especially since they trusted me with the money I had collected on my daily rounds and because of my dependability and diligence that came natural to me since I enjoyed the work and it filled my days, except when my grandmother, who was already in her late seventies, took me on occasion to museums and an occasional visit to the cinema on the nearby Alsterdorfer Strasse.

Sometimes I also went with Reinhold to the Hamburg fruit- and vegetable-market at five o'clock in the morning, although getting up at 4 o'clock did prove to me a major obstacle that I had to overcome by taking a much-needed nap in the afternoon at the home of my grandmother; she, in turn, spent much of her day reading or knitting while listening to the classical music of the Hamburg radio station [redacted] on her old-fashioned ear-phone headset that had for the most part gone out of fashion already at least half a dozen years earlier. Oddly enough, even today the interval between each hourly or half-hourly radio program in Hamburg -- is still filled with the melody of "Steuermann,halt die Wacht" from Richard Wagner's "Flying Dutchman."

However, one afternoon while I was in Reinhold's store, re-

moving rotting tomatoes from the window display - an unfortunate occurrence that did not prove to be a rarity in the pre-airconditioned era of the 1930s - Reinhold suddenly grabbed me by the arm and pulled me through the empty store into the dark potato-storage room. In a few words he explained to me that I had to lie flat on the concrete floor there while he was frantically emptying several fifty-pound sacks of potatoes over my body. He said he'd explain the reason for this frenzied puzzling action later and that I should under no circumstances move. It must be remembered that all this happened in the summer of 1938 when Hitler had been in power already for five-and-a-half years.

Seconds after this frightening episode, I heard the agitated voices of Haboldt, the horsecoachman, with whom I had in years past visited the fruit and vegetable market at five in the morning and who had always treated me there with the most wonderful scrambled-egg breakfasts of my life before returning at around seven with me to the Bruhns' grocery store.

This time, however, Haboldt's voice did not sound amiable at all but shrill and demanding. Moreover, he was accompanied by two other men, and all three of them demanded to know from the Bruhns where the Judenbengel (Jew bastard) Paul Kuttner was.

The Bruhns explained that I was not in the store that day, but one of the men accompanying Haboldt accused the Bruhns of lying since they had already checked with my grandmother who had informed them that I was working that afternoon at the Bruhns. At that point the two strangers identified themselves as members of the Gestapo and demanded that they search the premises. As it happened, the Bruhns' premises consisted only of their store, a kitchen where they had their meals and prepared a variety of jams in

glass jars for their customers and/two children, Reinhold and Margrit, one private room, which served as their bed- and living-room, (and sported the obligatory life-size portrait of Hitler, hanging over their sofa), and the dimly-lit cold potato-storage chamber, where I lay hidden.

Of course, search warrants did not exist in the lexicon of the Gestapo and they proceeded to search the dwelling. In fact, they must have done a pretty thorough job of searching for me in the other rooms because it took them a good quarter of an hour before they reached the potato-storage room where I lay buried under a few hundred pounds of unwashed potatoes.

Even face-down and hardly breathing, I could see the beam of a small flashlight zigzag over the potatoes covering me, although there was no electric light in the storage room and the only light in it came from a ceiling window that was habitually closed and spiderweb-covered. My heart was almost exploding with fright, but I did not budge. Too much was at stake, possibly my life, certainly banishment to a concentration camp, probably not only for me but the Bruhns as well for socializing with a non-Aryan. The flashlight appeared to brush lovingly over each of the thousands of potatoes as the two plainclothesmen frantically searched the dark room for the dreaded "Jewboy." One of the men then started to pick up a number of potatoes but realized that it would be futile to go through thousands of these vegetable plants that would also dirty his hands, even though I dreaded that by picking up a couple more of the potatoes he would really catch sight of my light-blue shirt or my legs, but at long last the two men realized that this was a fruitless search for a youngsters who had not exactly committed a serious crime, and the door to the potato chamber closed behind them as I heard one of the men tell the Bruhns that if they learned that the "Judenbengel" Kuttner ever

set foot in the store again, most likely to poison the German customers, they'd arrest the Bruhns, close their store for good and send them to a concentration camp.

With that warning Haboldt and the two Gestapo officers departed, and it goes without saying that I could never visit the Bruhns's store again as a helpmate. Perhaps that did not matter that much to me in the long run since a few months later, in February 1939, I could leave Nazi Germany anyway with a Kindertransport for England.

My darling grandmother, already in her late seventies at the time,became so frightened by this experience of mine that she forbade me even to play with the two Aryan neighborhood boys, Hans and Heinz Roman, who lived near the gorgeous house owned by my uncle Max (he had committed suicide a few months earlier because of the Nazis,having been deprived of his livelihood by them as a medical doctor), as well as by his wife Lotte and their daughters Ulla and Ilse, in the sylvan/suburb of Hamburg Volksdorf, thus depriving me of the last bit of juvenile fun when visiting Hamburg.

What concerns Reinhold Bruhn, I never saw him again. We corresponded occasionally after the war,but he died in the 1980s and his wife Irma about ten years later, although I did at least meet her once more in Hamburg in the early 1990s with my son Stephen,namely at the home of their daughter Margrit,whose diapers I had often changed in the mid-1930s,but who now had two grown daughters of her own. With the good-natured younger son of the senior Bruhns, Reinhold jr.,and his sweet wife Christel,I still correspond once in a while or they call me from Hamburg every Christmas,but Reinhold,being in his late sixties already,is also retired now and spends a great deal of his time with Christel in Northern Africa and Portugal, which they love.

As far as the detestable Haboldt, the horsecoachman, is concerned, Irma told me shortly before she died while I was visiting her in Hamburg with my son Stephen that he had been killed in an airraid on Hamburg during World War II.

But there happened to be one more fatal Hamburg ending, this one of a friend of mine I knew from a bar next to the Bruhns' vegetable store. Here I had encountered my very first "girlfriend," Erika, in 1933, the bar-owner's ten-year-old daughter, (see chapter "Loves That Did Not Last Long") as well as one of the bar's regular customers, a conductor on Hamburg's radio station, Adolf Secker, and this musical artist loved to tell me about classical music and its composers whenever he had his Löwenbrau in the adjacent beer-garden. To my regret I learned from Reinhold later that he had perished shortly after World War II while collecting coal for his family on Hamburg' elevated subway line ("Hochbahn"), having been struck by one of its trains.

HAVING A CRUSH ON THE MOTHER OF JESUS. (1938)

Everybody knows that the mother of Jesus Christ is greatly revered by Roman Catholics the world over. But I am not and never was a Catholic, even though at one period in my life, around 1950, when I was in my late twenties, my beautiful Irish-American girlfriend Viola Campbell of Sunnyside, Queens, insisted that I accompany her to early Mass each Sunday morning at seven after we had spent the night together in her home in amorous embrace, because she was of the firm conviction that I would eventually desert my religious belief and convert to Roman Catholicism before marrying her.

Her scheme failed miserably, especially when the Sunnyside priest praised the work of Senator Joseph R. McCarthy in his Sunday sermons while I detested the jr. Senator from Wisconsin for calling anybody a Communist sympathizer who disapproved of his tactics. At that time the Sunnyside church had just been renovated and a new huge fresco at the sides and above the altar displayed Christ and Mary (I think) in rather, to my mind, garish colors, something that upset me esthetically for its unchurch-like depiction of what is considered to be the Holy Family.

And yet, a colored robe on that fresco reminded me greatly of the garment that the 15-year-old girl had worn who played the part of the Virgin Mary during the 1937 Nativity Christmas performance in Berlin, for which I had auditioned as an aspiring actor (after performing some bit-parts in pre-Hitler movies in Berlin that were mostly written by Billy Wilder, a patient of my father's), and for which I was finally selected as one of the Wise Men, presenting Mary on stage with myrrh and incense. Her newborn son in the crib turned out to be a "Käthe Kruse doll with bright-blue eyes, crying Mama.

That Nativity play took place in the underground auditorium

of the recently built Hohenzollernplatz Church in the Wilmersdorf district of West Berlin.

The girl portraying Jesus's mother was called Ilse Trotzke, and luck would have it that the first time I ever seriously fell in love happened to be with, of all the people, the girl portraying the Mother of God or Jesus. But I was not the only one to be smitten by her good looks. One of my best friends in Berlin - - Atti Speyer - - whom I had known ever since we were toddlers and who turned out to be an Aryan teenager hating Hitler and his philosophy also had his eyes on the sexy Ilse (Mary). Probably Ilse could sense that we had a bit of a crush on her, especially when we tried ever so shyly to make stupid show-off remarks that to us 15-year-old boys appeared to be incredibly hilarious but usually were met by her with icy unamused silence.

The three of us also attended classes after school, studying mostly the Old Testament, even as late as 1938, but for reasons that escaped Atti and me, Ilse avoided us like poison and showed her disdain for our boorish behavior by sitting as far away from us as possible with the other girls. One additional thing that greatly impressed Atti and me was the fact that she did not belong to the BDM (the Hitler Youth movement for girls) and on top of that had joined our class, which was supervised by the clergyman Eduard Lindenmeyer, who was widely known, like the world-famous Martin Niemöller, to be an opponent of Hitler's racial and political theories and taught the Bible in his Bible classes according to the principles expounded by what came to be known in the Nazi period as the Confessional Church (Bekenntniskirche) as opposed to the Hitler-oriented German-Christian church (Deutsch-Nationale Christliche Kirche).

Everything Atti and I believed in and admired politically also seemed to be reflected in the off-hand remarks made by the focus of our amorous affections: Ilse. Not only did she belong to the anti-racial, anti-blood-and-honor church in Nazi Berlin, just like any opponent of Hitler, but she was also beautiful and had a figure, to boot, that was just waiting to be ravished and revered.

Our rehearsals became occasions of boundless joy, because Atti and I were instructed by the stage director to kneel as close as any male could get in front of this desirable Mary (whose Josef had his own girlfriend) when we theatrically offered our gifts, and her charming smile during each of the three-hour-long rehearsal sessions melted our hearts.

It was only after the rehearsals that the heavenly Mary came down to earth and reverted to her real 15-year-old persona when she would not even bestowe so much as a glance on us, let alone a come-hither sort of smile that we so devoutly hoped for.

But that devastating sweet young womanly stage-smile, her magnetic brown eyes crinkling above those ruby-red (un-Mary-like) lips that she liked to torment us with on stage when we knelt before her and I proclaimed: "Von weiter Ferne komm' ich her und bring Euch Gaben mehr und mehr" ("From a far distance I come to you and bring you gifts forever more")...well, that smile disintegrated into a cold marble-like mask once we walked off-stage and we couldn't even get to first base with her. Silly boys that we were, Atti and I frequently and unsuccessfully tried to take her home after rehearsal, but we did follow her on the sly through the dark and icecold December streets to her nearby apartment building on Pariser Strasse.

Here Atti and I often posted ourselves in the dark shadows of a doorway in the early evenings across the street from her

house, hoping to catch a glimpse of her loveliness when she went out shopping, which we had discovered she did most evenings when we did not rehearse.Only gradually did it dawn on Atti and me

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that seeing her enter a store to buy some milk, bread or cheese and then return to her apartment building did not turn out to be a truly satisfactory libido-fulfilling end product and we planned a more positive approach to meet with her face-to-face, although at that pubescent stage our overactive glands wished for far more risky ventures than just to sight her from afar and pursue her fruitlessly. To have a crush on our Virgin Mary became a lustier adventure for us than to be part of a theatrical crèche with the Holy Virgin, merely bringing myrrh and incense and gold.

But apart from our thespian contacts with Maria, she would not allow us to get any closer to her outside the church auditorium.

Not that Atti and I could by any stretch of the imagination be called heartbroken since our lifelong boyhood friendship and mutual hatred of Hitler's regime even superceded our failure to get to know Ilse better. Ours indeed was a wonderful comradeship. Often we would read chapters from the juvenile novels by Karl May to one another, especially those dealing with the author's fabricated experiences in the Wild West with his American-Indian Apache friend Winnetou. That Karl May happened to be Hitler's favorite author did not faze us at all; of much more importance to us was the fact that Atti's father had really known Karl May in his youth since both of them came from Radebeul near Dresden, where May wrote most of his 60-plus volumes when he was not in jail for some minor legal infractions, like burglary. Often we helped Atti's father to erect enormous table-tableaus of Indians battling the white invaders in America's Middle West, tables that occupied half of his apartment of eight large rooms and were a joy to behold for their realistic geographic and battle presentation.

Hitler had already been in power for close to five years in

December 1937 when finally the evening arrived that we could present our Nativity stageplay to the parents, the friends and neighborhood congregation of the Hohenzollernplatz Church.

Enormous cans of piping hot cocoa and dozens of freshly baked Christmas stollen filled the tables decorated with pinetree branches, silvery strands of angels' hair and fat burning candles in the huge underground auditorium. Grammophone records played Bach, Handel, but most tellingly Mendelssohn; also, the festive atmosphere was doubly enhanced by the "sell-out" crowd that attended the joyous festivities.

The clergyman, Eduard Lindenmeyer, a tall never-smiling minister, who had already spent time in a Nazi concentration camp for his openly anti-Hitler remarks during his sermons, and his sister Agnes Maria, who happened to be one of the few German female ministers of the Gospel, officiated and supervised the entire proceedings.

Of course, my mother and sister attended the festivities, while we Nativity-players received last-minute instructions on how best to portray the roles we were to fill, and in retrospect it must be admitted that the show went off without a hitch and proved to be a great success. The applause we reaped from the packed auditorium as well as the half-dozen curtain calls we took left an indelible impression on me that has never been expunged from my mind over 65 years later.

After we performers had removed our make-up, costumes and props, we could finally join our loved ones in the auditorium and as 14- and 15-years-olds basked in our glory, enjoying the high praise we reaped for our thespian triumph. To my surprise my mother and sister were engaged in a deep heart-to-heart conversation with a woman in her late forties. Apparent-

ly this lady's husband had died when their daughter was only five years old and the cause of death turned out to be diabetes; he had lost first his toes, then one of his legs due to the gangrene bacteria afflicting his limb, and when my mother heard the word "gangrene", she mentioned in passing that her own father, Eugen Fraenkel, was the person known for his discovery of the gangrene bacteria.

What impressed me most of all in the course of this conversation was the fact that the lady my mother was talking to kept holding hands with my first love, Ilse. I asked the lady how she knew Maria and learned that the two were mother and daughter. And then Ilse wanted to know what my relationship was to the daughter of the scientist who had discovered the gangrene bacteria, whereupon my mother explained that I was her son.

Within seconds, Maria pulled me aside, holding my hot and trembling hands in her own and demanding to know why I had not told her about my grandfather before. I stuttered that it had never occurred to me to bring up my grandfather when we met during rehearsals, but finally I did fill her in on some of my Jewish family history and she listened intently to it, then whispered into my ear that she would meet me once a week and maybe on those occasions we could go for walks together if this was agreeable to our mothers. Naturally, I jumped at the chance but kept these hopefully romantic encounters from my good friend Atti since I did not want him to interrupt these sacred trysts and possibly deviate her attraction for me to him.

Atti had already departed by the time Ilse and I acquainted our mothers with these happy tidings and both of them agreed on the spot to these street encounters, and so Ilse and I met every Wednesday afternoon in front of her house (a few minutes' walk from mine) after completing our homework, and then we went for

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long walks. Those were bitterly cold winter days, but we wore no gloves holding hands - an indescribably heavenly feeling - and when they became too cold, I put the hand I was holding into my coat pocket, an act that she did not resist. Once in a while I invited her to a movie or some cocoa and cake at the Schmidt Konditorei (confectionary) at the corner of Kaiser Allee and Pariser Strasse or to her favorite place: Cafe Josty at the corner of Kaiser Allee and Trautenau Strasse. I lived only a minute's walk from that restaurant that had been made famous by Germany's best-known juvenile novel of the late 1920s: Emil and the Detectives, by Erich Kästner, and it was in the film adaptation of that book that I played a small part around 1930 as one of the juvenile detectives.

Telling Ilse about these "exploits" of mine, endeared me even more to her. And when we held hands in the warm pastry shop at Schmidt's and I treated her to her favorite, Schwarzwälder Kirschtorte (Black Forest Cherry Creamcake), my mind usually went numb and all I wanted at that stage was to hold her in my arms, if possible naked, and kiss her madly.

Finally, though, I blurted out the truth to her when she asked me why I wasn't a member of the Jungvolk, the Nazi youth organization prior to German boys joining the Hitler Youth at the age of 16. This conversation took place on a blustery day in February 1938 while we were walking down the closeby Güntzel Strasse and she pulled me in the darkness of that raw winter evening into a doorway and demanded to know why I had not confided my family secret to her before.

With a heavy heart I replied that I was afraid she would not have anything further to do with me since she was Aryan and, it must be clear to her by now, I was not.

She was a devout Christian of the anti-Hitler Protestant

Confessional Church, she whispered to me, glancing up and down the street to make sure we were not overheard,and then went on to explain that if Jesus had been alive today Hitler would have sent Him to a concentration camp as a Jew. Or as a baptized Jew, a non-Aryan, and that it did not matter to her what evil the Nazis ascribed to the Jews. In fact, she considered it an honor to hold hands with the grandson of the discoverer of the gangrene bacteria.

Seconds later, her arms wound around my neck and it was the first time in my life that a girl I had a crush on kissed me on my lips. My mind reeled. She wore no lipstick outside her "stage-life", but I sensed a faint fragrance of perfume that totally played havoc with my libido.And then the crème de la crème of kissing almost made me swoon when her tongue touched mine and the sweet taste of the cocoa she had been drinking with me at Cafe Josty mingled with mine inside my mouth. Totally unprepared for this sudden wish-fulfillment, a lightning bolt of desire shot down to my loins, and hard as I tried to suppress the unspoken-of bodily response of this desire that overcame me with such sudden unexpectedness, it did not work, and even at this most private of sensual moments I feared that Maria would pull back in disgust and report me to the Gestapo for an immoral response to her amorous advances.

I was mortified with embarrassment, expecting Maria to slap me angrily in my face. Instead her tongue gyrated wildly and strenuously against mine and my hand, in response, ventured hesitantly up her body, up her overcoat, until it gently cupped her left breast. I had never felt anything so delicious in my entire life; it surpassed anything I had dreamed of in my wildest erotic dreams, and my mind absolutely reeled when she opened her topcoat and I could feel her hard nipple in my palm.

I blurted out that I would always love her and wanted to marry her and have lots of children with her. Ilse said nothing and continued kissing me insanely, and there I stood, amorously aflame and hoping that she would not notice how much she was arousing me, [illegible]. Yet at the same time I wanted more, more of her, everything, and then my hand wandered hungrily down to her loins and it was here that she finally put a stop to my advances. It crushed me. Did she not want me?

In the bitter-cold dark of the doorway I saw her smile, her ~~beautiful~~ pearly white teeth, when she whispered that we should wait a bit longer.

I asked her naively: "How much longer? A day? Two days?"

She would let me know. Maybe the year after our confirmation.

The following day, my fried Atti Speyer and I planned on seeing a re-released film, starring Germany's favorite movie star, Hans Albers, in something called "Der Mann, der Sherlock Holmes War" ("The Man Who Was Sherlock Holmes") at the Spiechern Strasse cinema and on the way there I told him about my experiences with Ilse and stupidly, immaturely, boasted how far I had already made advances to her and then fibbed that both she and I were planning on a possible wedding after our confirmation.

Atti stopped in the middle of the street and pulled me over under the awning of a clothing store. He said he could not trust his ears. Now that I had spilled the beans about my half-innocent tryst with Maria, he saw no reason why he should remain silent about his romance. Because Atti had met Ilse as well on the sly, usually on Tuesdays, and she also let him touch her breasts, even though he also never got any further, just like me, than her midriff when she deflected his advancing hand from exploring

her further south of the navel. Both of us were crushed. We realized we were nothing but chumps in her eyes. Such infamy! Such disloyalty and unfaithfulness had never been registered in the annals of human relationships! On the spot we decided that we would confront her the next time both of us took her home after our Nativity rehearsal.

And that occasion arrived within a matter of days. After we had deposited Ilse at her doorway, Atti sprang the surprise on her that we were both wise to her tricks now. Why had she deceived us and played both of us for suckers?

Her lovely, seductive smile froze into a thin hard line, and tears began to brim in her eyes and course down her rosy cheeks. In turn, she asked us weepily why we had betrayed her and bragged to one another about our conquest.

I replied that we never bragged about kissing her but just confided to each other what pleasure we had derived from our contact with her.

"So, what do you want me to do?" she demanded. "Give both of you up?"

Now that turned out to be a choice neither Atti nor I had considered. And something we ruled out immediately. She then turned the tables on us and demanded to know whether one of us would volunteer to "drop out of the race" so that she could remain faithful to just one of us. And if that was the case, who'd be willing here and now to give her up?

Atti and I stared at each other, not realizing that she had cornered us. Not only had we forgotten to censure and castigate her for two-timing us, but now we had to decide which one of us silly boys should drop out of the race and sacrifice his pleasure of feeling her soft perfumed breasts so that only just one

of us could enjoy the sensual delights she was willing to share with us.

This thespian Mary certainly turned out to be far craftier than the Mother of Jesus she portrayed on stage. We had no ready answer to her demand, the condition she had set. Friendship no longer entered our mind; we were on our own, on the defensive, and had to decide right here on the spot who would be the lucky winner, who the fall guy, in order to enjoy her bodily favors, limited as they were, but overpowering as they turned out to be for us young cuckolds nevertheless.

Neither Atti nor I were willing there and then to give up what had such an ecstatic delirious and mind-blasting manly effect on us and which had probably never been experienced with such power by any living being before.

Ilse's seductive smile returned triumphantly to her lovely kissable lips as she realized she had given us a brutal choice. If both of us felt cheated by her act of "self-sacrificng love," she explained, she would be quite willing to give both of us up to be fair to Atti and me. However, if we did accept this solution of hers, then we would have to continue the old routine of her kissing Atti one evening and me the next. What was so horrible about that?

Stupid, doltish boys that we were, we simply felt compelled to accept this ignoble solution of hers. And to make sure that there were no further misunderstandings, she insisted that we rehearse the kissing scene right now in front of each other.

I objected, explaining that I'd feel self-conscious kissing her in front of Atti, but she shot back that we did not feel embarrassed watching movie stars like Clark Gable kissing Myrna Loy on the screen. She had a point there and I had to watch Atti

embracing Ilse passionately and much too long for my liking. As a revenge I hugged Ilse as tightly as I could and gave her as a sensual/French kiss as I could.

In response, Ilse insisted that we should go through this act a few more times to avoid any future thoughts of jealousy since she enjoyed both our kisses equally, meaning tremendously.

We loosened up a bit and repeated the same passionate tongue kiss halfa dozen more times until the three of us had truly sated our juvenile desires.

We two Wise Men (it never said in the Bible how many there were) delighted in "Mary's" God-given attributes for several more months until I emigrated to England in February 1939, still virginal at the age of 16.

Atti wrote to me occasionally until the outbreak of World War II in September cut off communications between us, but I never heard from Ilse although I did drop her a couple of letters from my school in Dorset. Atti mentioned her just once in his letters, and on that occasion only in passing, that they had had an argument and broken up, but of course I never found out whether that was true. They would have made a beautiful couple.

After the war, as late as the 1960s, I learned that both of them had been killed in an airraid on Berlin. It broke my heart.

Plus another short postscript: That wonderful anti-Nazi clergyman Eduard Lindenmeyer of the Hohenzollernplatz Church, who had landed even during the war in a concentration camp once more, simply could not tolerate being victimized by another dictatorship at the end of the war - - the Soviets - - that it prompted him to climb to the top of the church's belfry in 1945 and hurl himself to his death. And our Third Wise Man, Bernd Danielsen, returned to his native Sweden before the outbreak of World War II.

THE NIGHT OF THE BROKEN GLASS...AND HEART. (1938)

Surviving the Hitler era and World War II was no laughing matter. Nevertheless, a few frightening episodes from that period more than six decades ago do stand out in my mind more clearly today than incidents that happened to me last year.

Those were constantly brutal melodramatic times in an era of peace the likes of which the world has virtually never witnessed since.

To take only one example when I was sixteen years old: the infamous Kristallnacht, the Night of the Broken Glass, of November 9-10, 1938, when most stores in Germany and Austria still owned by Jews were looted, burned or destroyed by the Nazis. Thousands of Jews were sent to concentration camps, with dozens of them killed there, and about two hundred synagogues were burned to the ground. The Nazi government also impounded insurance money claimed by those dispossessed who were not Aryan and who then asked their insurance companies futilely for compensation. Motorcycles and cars owned by Jews were also confiscated and, to add insult to injury, these innocent victims - always loyal Germans and Austrians - would no longer be permitted to attend cinemas, theaters, museums or own radiosets.

All of this in retaliation of a German embassy official in Paris being unfortunately assassinated by a desperate Polish Jew. Ironically, this German official, Ernst vom Rath, had little sympathy for the Nazi regime and was himself under investigation by Nazi authorities, and the Pole, Herschel Grynszpan, was 17 years old, trying everything legal up to that point (but in vain) to save his parents, who had been deported from Germany to the equally anti-Semitic Poland.

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Late that evening (November 9), my 26-year-old sister Annemarie and I persuaded our mother, who had not yet heard of the Nazi-inspired looting from neighbors, that we felt like taking a walk, claiming that I had a splitting headache.

As we approached the nearby Fasanenstrasse, it became immediately clear to us that something had gone horribly awry. Dense clouds of smoke stung our eyes and nostrils and throngs of pedestrians blocked the sidewalk at this late hour of the evening.

Only as we made some headway on the trafficless road did it dawn on us that Berlin's best-known synagogue there was on fire. Equally ominous was the fact that not a single fire engine was in sight or could be heard approaching for at least an hour. In fact, only

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after the Fasanenstrasse synagogue had almost burned to the ground did just one fire engine make its slow approach. A crew of less than half-a-dozen men finally aimed its hose on the fire, but the feeble stream of water did little to put out the blaze and by that time the damage had been done anyway and reduced the house of worship to a heap of smoldering rubble. We did see a number of SA men gaze proudly upon the smoking ruin, laughing and exhorting each other not to be injured by the "Judenfeuer" (Jew fire), but there was no response from the throng of spectators, who simply stared incredulously and silently at the glowing ruins that had four hours earlier been a house of prayer. (Today, only one sole upright pillar remains standing as a historical reminder of the place where this beautiful synagogue used to serve its worshippers.)

Annemarie grabbed my hand on that bitterly cold night and in the light of the flickering flames I saw tears in her eyes, even though we had never set foot inside that structure. I was in my mid-teens and simply did not understand what the Nazis meant to achieve by this vile act of un-godly vandalism, the destruction of a building of divinity. Not until sixty-three years later was I so incensed and saddened again by the annihilation of another structure, when a gang of Muslim gangsters destroyed New York's World Trade Center in 2001, killing thousands of innocent civilians.

Even on our way home, when Annemarie and I only held hands in the raw November night, not uttering a word, did we come across another scene of wanton destruction. At the corner of Kaiser Allee and Spiechern Strasse, the ugly sound of windows being smashed caused us to stop short of the store, where my mother and sister had in the past always purchased their clothing: at Israel.

Nobody had set fire to this place: instead hordes of adults climbed through the broken shop-display windows, looting as many

articles of clothing as each of the vandals could carry before escaping through the demolished windows into the dark night. Here a number of Schupos (cops) watched grimly without lifting a finger as the vandalizing civilians made their successful getaway from the scene of their crime.

Innocently, my sister asked one of the policemen why none of the looters were being arrested and he whispered to us that the police had received instructions from higher up not to hold anybody involved in looting a Jewish-owned store.

One other incident stands out in my mind that fateful night, an event of great embarrassment and unpleasantness.

As we wound our way home through the crowded nocturnal streets, littered with anti-Semitic leaflets and glass shards from shattered car and store windows, we finally made it to our house and silently crossed the pitch-black courtyard of our building, but as we entered the rear entrance at the other end of the yeard, we noticed to our horror that the tall SS Standartenführer Dose was standing right in front of us, waiting for the arrival of the elevator that he also intended taking up to our top floor.

Annemarie grabbed my hand, but we could do nothing but advance the few steps hesitantly to the elevator where the SS officer now turned to face us and himself was caught unawares, turning a deep crimson and knowing fully well that we also meant to use the tiny elevator that could only hold three passengers, provided they were tightly packed together.

On Crystal Night (a name ascribed to this unhappy night some time later) Herr Dose was about the last person in the world we meant to share this minuscule confined space with, especially after that awful, violent scene with him in our apartment three years earlier when he proposed to my sister, not realizing we did

not belong to Hitler's Master Race.

Immediately I could feel my heart thundering under my jawbone. Annemarie started to tremble violently and clutched my hand; in fact, she stopped in her tracks well before we reached Dose. He bunched his white-gloved hands into fists, probably to contain his own nervousness at the sight of his unexpected "enemies," and just as the elevator reached the ground floor he muttered some words about having forgotten something, then rushed past us, pushed the door open to the backyard and vanished into the dark night outside.

We darted into the waiting elevator and were on our way up when I noticed that I had accidentally dropped my black beret in the rush to the elevator. I knew my mother would be annoyed, and rightfully so, if she became aware of my carelessness in losing part of my apparel, and I informed my sister that I'd go down again to retrieve my cap on the ground floor and that, by all means, she should let herself into our apartment meanwhile and explain to our mother why I had gone back to the lobby.

This she did, and with a heavy heart I ventured downstairs again, not knowing whether Standartenführer of the SS Dose would be waiting for the elevator on the ground floor.

As I reached the lobby and opened the elevator door, I was relieved to note that Dose was not in sight anywhere. I advanced quickly the few steps to the door leading into the backyard and when I bent down to pick up my beret the door was pushed open from the outside and struck my head with such force that I was literally flung off-balance into the wall, landing on the floor right in front of none other than SS officer Dose.

Again he stopped aghast and amazed at seeing me on the floor, and perhaps it was a natural reaction rather than a premeditated

act of kindness. but he actually leaned forward and helped me up off the floor, enquiring what I was doing here when a few minutes earlier I was about to step into the elevator with my sister.

As we entered the tiny slow-motion lift together, I explained in a shaky voice that I had lost my beret downstairs and just came to retrieve it. Stupidly,I then asked him whether he had seen the broken glass on the streets,whereupon he stared icily down at me,He felt safe and superior now,having recovered his Übermensch dominance over this inconsequential non-Aryan boy in the tiny elevator, and he barked at me that if that damned Polish Jew had not killed vom Rath in Paris, none of this destruction of Jewish stores would have happened. Naively I asked him: what did a Jewish clothing store in Berlin have to do with the act of a Polish Jew in Paris, but by that time we had reached the top floor, and as we stepped out of the elevator, he turned to me once more saying, "Pity your family isn't Aryan."

He went up the flight of stairs to his attic apartment, but after that incident I don't remember ever seeing him again.

Oddly enough, a few days after that event I heard a similar sentiment being expressed, this time when I was summoned to the office of the superintendent of my Berlin high school,although on that occasion Herr Direktor Voelkle added regretfully that I plainly contained too many Jewish blood corpuscles in my veins to be acceptable in a Nordic society,specifically in a German classroom. (Strangely enough, I had been acceptable there for the ten previous years.) That particular morning,though, November 15, 1938, turned out to be my last day of school in Nazi Germany and a most humiliating experience,as described in the chapter "Elisabeth Landmann Must Be Honored."

To put it mildly, I was banned from education in Nazi Germany because my great-grandparents lacked the foresight to have my grandparents baptized eighty years earlier.

Before going home to my mother and sister and explaining to them the latest in a non-stop series of malicious events,I paid a visit to my ailing father who was living with his second wife Ida on the fa-

shionable Kurfürstendamm and told them about my dismissal from school.

They were not that surprised following the dreadful events of Kristallnacht and especially of the horrifying spectacle we had to witness from their balcony a few days earlier, November 10, 1938. Because about ten minutes after my arrival there on that date, our attention was drawn to the sudden noise of shouts and screams on the street below and we rushed to the balcony facing Kurfürstendamm in order to find out the cause of the commotion. I remember helping my father, incapacitated by his 1936 stroke, onto the balcony, and it was here that we were forced to witness one of the most ghastly spectacles of my life.

A mob of Brownshirts and SS men had seized a girl no older than 10 or 11 in a crowd of onlookers and strung a rope around her neck, fastening her wrists behind her back with more rope. She was wearing a red winter-coat with a white ermine collar and a pair of white stockings and kept screaming, begging for mercy. One of the SS men, shouting: "She's Jewish," then swung the other end of the rope high up over the crossbar of a lamp post, and a couple of these black-uniformed hooligans made short shrift of it and simply pulled her up until the noose of the rope tightened firmly around her neck and she began to struggle desperately for breath. Seconds later already her body went limp, twitching back and forth three, four times, and finally a stream of yellow urine came running down one of her white stockings, like a liquid serpent trying to escape. The crowd had gone dead-quiet, staring in disbelief and horror at this hideous scene on that raw November eve, but nobody came to her aid. For anybody to have resisted or defended the little girl would have meant the immediate death knell for such a foolhardy hero. My father and Ida wept in the cold and I retired to their bathroom and threw up and then went home to the soothing love and embrace of my mother, yet never was I able to shake off the image of this bestial

specatcle of well over six decades ago.

It was that night that I stopped worshipping God, but I do argue with Him in my nocturnal prayers, nonetheless recognizing Him as the Supreme Being, and I do so to this very day, fearing Him for His omnipotence and His frequent indifference.

Philosophers and psychologists have long presented the world with various interpretations of God's Will and all of them are both right and wrong, because we shall never know exactly what the Good Lord has up His sacred sleeve, certainly not the warring religious chieftains and their balloon-headed followers spouting ecclesiastical platitudes nor the atheists who try to vainly prove that something that's invisible has no power, no validity. (At one time nobody could prove that air exists.) Christians, Jews, Muslims know how to fight each other, but temporary victory on the battlefield has never been a guarantee of God's Will or His protection from a future disaster.

This century Muslims and Christians like to fight to the last drop of the others' blood, meaning that each of them believes that they alone have God's ear. I think (with Gandhi) that of both faiths, as well as of Judaism, the best each religion has to offer is their religion, and the worst thing is the fanatical followers of these religions.

Speaking for myself, unless I try to will myself under my own steam out of some tragic predicament, God plainly gives up on me, because He had given me the will at birth to fend for myself - like surviving cancer and the Holocaust, come hell or high water. It's true: depending on others is, for the most part, equivalent to relying on the enemy. Still, God is a patient listener and understands my simmering anger and fears, I hope.

But to get back to Earth, I doubt very much, that at the time of Kristallnacht, I cared overly about the difficulty I experienced in pleasing my Latin teacher, Dr. Fenske, who liked to pinch my cheeks whenever I failed to corrugate some Latin irregular verbs correctly; even though I had tried to study them religiously at home while Annemarie, my sister, took her weekly lesson in classical melody/whistling next door from a teacher, the Italian master Signor Gialdini, who had appeared on stage at Berlin's Scala variety theater.

But then, what did all this matter? A few days after the Night of the Broken Glass Nazi laws decreed that I be expelled from attending school in Nazi Germany as somebody who was "polluting" Aryan classrooms./ It turned me into an angry teen, seeing God do absolutely nothing/ to relieve our plight; unless the soothing words of our eighty-year-old lodger, Emma Böhmchen, could be considered some balm. Mostly I felt I could find some solace - except for my family's love - only in classical-music broadcasts (before the Nazis confiscated the radio and piano/ from us) and in the light music performed over the air by Herbert Jäger, Otto Dobrindt and Willi Steiner.

And yet I feel that out of this immature anger of mine against the Chaplinesque enemy chieftain,/ I started to finally fashion some nebulous words that very night in November 1938, words that I could verbalize only years later into my life's motto and earthly guidance: Obstacles exist to be overcome!

A PRANK AND SOME FRIENDS HALF A CENTURY LATER. (1938)

Sometimes, even under the best of circumstances, you can get bored. Such a period of boredom descended upon me one rainy afternoon outside Hamburg, Germany, in the 1990s when I happened to visit my cousin Ursula (Ulla) Fraenkel. She was the daughter of my mother's older brother Max, who had shot himself in March 1938 when the Nazis had deprived him of his livelihood, his medical practice, because of Hitler's anti-Semitic policies.

Ulla lived in her parents' lovely brick house at Mellenbergweg 55 in Volksdorf, a magnificently wooded suburb of Hamburg. In fact, she had resided there with her family since the late 1920s. To my way of thinking and nostalgic memory, it was the most gorgeous house I had ever lived in, set in an enormous garden that boasted an immensely long gravel path leading from the dark adjacent forest to the red-shingled brick house. Each side of this path was guarded by the most fantastic seven-foot-high poles festooned with thousands of pulchritudinous wild roses. These in turn converted the entire lawn, the house, its wooded surroundings into a perfumed picture postcard, a fairytale paradise.

To my regret, the place had one perilous disadvantage: in summer it was humming and buzzing with billions of bees and wasps, of which I seemed to be their prize attraction. Otherwise I felt completely at home in this breathtaking, rustic environment, bordered by the immense forest through which I often bicycled over dangerously protruding roots whenever I was picked up at the Meiendorf subway station a couple of miles away by my slightly older cousins Ulla and Ilse Fraenkel.

In their lovely home we engaged in the most harmless games, such as hide and seek, as well as in Halma, chess, bike tours or listening to

Ulla playing Mozart and Telemann on her flute.

Unfortunately, my last school vacation there/in the late summer of 1938, /before I emigrated to England about half-a-year later, still leaves a bitter taste in my mouth even today.

Two Aryan neighborhood boys my age (15) and I often biked to the house of/the wife of a reputed criminal, who sat in jail, and we rang her doorbell and then took off on our bikes. This stupid prank went off without a hitch for a few days, with us always making our successful getaway, until one sunny afternoon a local policeman paid a surprise visit to my aunt (Tante Lotte) and explained to her that one of the two neighborhood boys had been recognized by the old crone; she had reported him to the police and when he had admitted that he was involved in this practical joke, he also incriminated his two "companions-in-crime," meaning the other boy and me.

The police came to visit my aunt while I was out biking in the Volksdorf Forest, and when I returned to her home for lunch she confronted me ~~xxxxxx~~,terribly upset by this police report, and was adamant about my leaving her house immediately and returning to my grandmother, who lived in another part of Hamburg. I was heartbroken and even more so when my grandmother insisted that I return to Berlin the next day as punishment for my abominable behavior.

She was (rightfully so) especially upset because my asinine ~~behavior~~ prank could reflect on her personally,if it ever became public knowledge that one of the perpetrators of this juvenile banter was not Aryan. After all, Adolf Hitler had been in power for five-and-a-half years already, was fully entrenched, and anti-Semitism was rampant throughout Nazi Germany.

My darling mother,though, was much more forgiving when I

arrived fearfully and contrite in Berlin. I was so ashamed of my misdeed that I cried all the way from the railroad station to my home. (After the war I learned that my two teenage-conspirators had been killed as German soldiers in France and Russia respectively.)

I did return to Hamburg again after my 1939 departure from Nazi Germany, namely in October 1986, and I spent most of that vacation with my unmarried cousin Ulla at her house in Volksdorf, but also during the second time I visited Hamburg in the fall of 1990. Her sister Ilse had married meanwhile but was now a widow, living about twenty minutes away by car in her own comfortable fairy-tale house in the village of Klein Hansdorf.

For decades after World War II I was not psychologically ready to set foot on German soil, especially Berlin and Hamburg, where the Nazi-era ghosts of yesteryear and my murdered family still spooked my mind and played havoc with my psyche.

But one morning in early 1986, I woke up in my New York apartment and immediately felt I could set foot on German soil again without the slightest feeling of regret or compunction, although I still needed psychological support and the presence of my son Stephen to return to my country of birth after the Holocaust.

During my visit to Volksdorf in 1990, on a fateful rainy afternoon when my cousin Ulla had to attend to some business in the city of Hamburg and my son Stephen was visiting a friend there, I was left alone in their suburban Volksdorf villa, which I had loved so much since my childhood, but on that particular day I became a bit morose, feeling deserted in this huge house, with the added disadvantage of being unable to go out in the garden because of the heavy downpour.

Somehow I could not amuse myself with reading the German

books in Ulla's library, including Nietzsche's "Also Sprach Zarathustra," which I had given as a birthday present to my Tante Lotte in 1937, all of them stacked neatly in the custom-built bookcase, and in a gloomy, bored mood I began leafing through the Hamburg telephone directory, wondering whether to call some stranger at random and see if I could engage him or her in a conversation. A crazy idea! But I figured, what did I have to lose. I opened the relephone directory at random, closed my eyes and pointed a finger at one of the myriad names. I opened my eyes again and glanced at the name my finger had landed on, staring at it in disbelief, unable to trust what my eyes told me to be true.

My finger had stopped directly under the name of Klaus Brockerhoff, about as rare a name as any in Germany, or anywhere for that matter. Because Klaus Brockerhoff happened to be one of my closest schoofriends and classmates in Berlin's Bismarck Gymnasium back in the 1930s, half a century earlier. Even though Klaus had known about my family's religious heritage, including my Jewish "Abstammung," (as the Germans liked to refer to such racial matters,) and the abominable way non-Aryans and Jews were being treated in Nazi Germany already at that early stage of the Hitler epoch in the mid- and late 1930s, he - like the rest of my classmates - totally ignored my religious background and treated me as their equal, as one of their own, always with respect as well as spending afternoons after school with me at my house or playing soccer with me on the street after we had completed our homework. Even after my emigration to England in February 1939, Klaus (and other pals of mine) still visited my mother and sister on occasion and wrote me a few letters, some of which had been opened by the Nazi censors, with parts of these letters having been blacked out by them as though they feared that these 16-year-old school friends of mine were giving away state secrets to the British government. Of course, once a state of war existed between Germany and England in September 1939, we lost

touch altogether and even though I remember many of the incidents through which Klaus and I had lived in the 1930s, they, like the rest of my Berlin schoolmates, began to fade more and more from my memory when daily challenges in the following half-century occupied and dominated my mind, my very existence.

Nevertheless, right after sighting Klaus's name serendipitously in the 1990 Hamburg telephone directory, I dialled his number, but there was any response. Although I stayed in Hamburg for a few more days before my return to New York, I attempted to reach him by phone half a dozen more times, but to no avail. Nobody ever picked up the phone at the other end.

Before my departure home I asked my cousin Ulla whether she would occasionally try to call Klaus's number and then mention my address to him, so that he could get in touch with me, if he really turned out to be that classmate of mine of 51 years ago in Berlin.

Already a few days after my arrival back in the States, I had a call from Ulla in Hamburg that she finally had been able to reach Klaus and that he, indeed, turned out to be the Klaus Brockerhoff who had gone to school with me in the 1930s in Berlin. Moreover, Ulla had already invited Klaus to visit her at her house in Volksdorf the following week and given him my New York address since he definitely wanted to get in touch with me. And so he did.

His first letter to me was dated December 30, 1990, and not surprisingly it was chockful of news about his life, but unfortunately I could preserve only the first page of his wonderful letter and have unaccountably lost the other pages, although I did successfully keep all the remainder of his correspondence with me.

He wrote that he had still visited my mother and sister a few times before the war at our Berlin home, but then lost touch with them altogether when my sister went underground and my mother was deported to Auschwitz, where she perished in the last gassing operation in November 1944. Klaus was shocked by my disclosure of these facts, and also that Annemarie, my sister, had died of cancer in 1964, because he did have a bit of a crush on her after visiting me quite a few times in the 1930s, when she was in her early twenties.

In this first letter of his, he did mention that a number of schoolfriends, whose names and faces I still remembered, especially Hasso von dem Bussche-Ippenburg (with whom I had started writing a detective novel in 1937, which was abandoned after I departed for England), Erich Hirsch, Fritz Hellms, Dieter Philipp, Jürgen Wedepohl, Karl Zahn, etc, were still alive and he gave me their addresses. I started corresponding with all of them and was truly impressed that they still remembered me and could never quite understand why the Nazis insisted that I leave their school. Finally, however, most of my old pals dropped their correspondence with me when they realized that they had very little to communicate to me after the first exchange of our correspondence. That is, everybody except for Klaus, Hasso and Erich. The latter owned a large hacienda in Nicaragua of all the places, which he tried to sell several years later since other businesses kept him quite occupied in Germany, especially in Frankfurt.

The highlight, for me at least, came on October 18, 1992, when I visited Klaus and his darling wife Antonie in their lovely house just outside the tiny village of Kirchlinteln near Hamburg, for the first and only class reunion of my life.

All the abovementioned former fellow-students of mine welcomed

me with open arms, almost like a long-lost brother, and we emptied our hearts and minds to each other. Almost all of them brought their wives along while I had Stephen with me as a sort of moral support. Most of my schoolmates had lived in retirement already for quite a few years, being close to 70 years old, although one of them, Dr. Erich Hirsch, still operated his hacienda in Middle America.

Without exception, each of my schoolfriends had been drafted into Hitler's army, some of them were wounded in the Soviet Union, others like Klaus made a POW by the British Army in Italy, although many of my other 1930s classmates ended up in the war as fatalities.

Naturally, it proved to be hard for all of them to pull themselves up by their bootstraps in the immediate postwar period, which would have had disastrous consequences for them if it had not been for the United States' generous Marshall Plan.

Still, after a few decades, Germany began to enjoy the fruits of its Wirtschaftswunder (economic miracle), my schoolmates married, had children and grandchildren of their own, but each of these friends of mine was especially intrigued by my own adventures abroad since I happened to be the only surviving non-Aryan student of our Berlin school (with the recently vanished Werner Fuchs; the others had perished in Nazi concentration camps.

My classmates and I stayed up all night exchanging life-stories, then had a three-hour brunch at a nearby restaurant before saying good-bye to each other when, finally, Stephen and I returned to Ulla's home in Volksdorf.

Over the next few years I enjoyed corresponding with virtually all of them, although my most extensive exchange of letters was with Klaus, Hasso and Erich. Once or twice I even exchanged let-

ters with Dr. Hermann Hoyer, who was our art instructor and already well into his nineties, but he still remembered me as one of his students from the 1930s, even asking me in his first letter whether I had been able to improve my skills in rendering the art of perspective in my drawings, in which I had been particularly weak sixty years earlier. It still amazes me how a teacher should remember the weakness of one of his thousands of students of six decades ago, going so far as to put this validly crafted criticism in his meticulous script when he was close to a hundred years old. Dr. Hoyer died shortly after his hundredth birthday in Berlin in the late 1990s.

Tragically, my good friend Hasso also died in the 1990s as did another schoolfriend, Dieter Philipp, a short time later.

In the beginning of 1997 I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, aged 74, and at the following class reunion that year, my former co-students called me in New York one day in September at 4 o'clock in the morning to wish me a speedy recovery while they were having their communal breakfast, with each one of them toasting me by phone in raising their glasses of champagne. This totally unexpected telephone call almost moved me to tears.

In the mid-spring of 1998, Klaus Brockerhoff wrote me that lately he had been suffering from terrible bouts of fatigue and that he would enter a local hospital for a complete overhaul in May. The day before he entered the hospital he still wrote a heartfelt letter to me, in which he expressed his hope that I would at least attend the next class reunion at his home.

About three weeks later, I received an announcement from his wife, Antonie, that Klaus had died on June 1. He had never realized that his whole body had been wracked by cancer.

Neither for that matter did my cousin Ulla. She never smoked

(or drank) in her life, lived constantly in the world's finest climate, was always active on the land in her large garden, and in 1992, at the age of 65, she died of lung cancer in her beloved house in Volksdorf. I was heartbroken and made it my business to fly to Hamburg to attend her funeral. Thank God, I still had my two other cousins, Ilse and Jochen. And, of course, my son Stephen.

Years later, in September 2001, one of my best friends in prewar-Berlin happened to watch the opening of the Jewish Museum in Berlin on German TV, and on that program he saw one of the exhibits - - a towel my mother had packed in my suitcase when I left Nazi Germany for England in 1939, the only remaining possession I still had from her, which I had donated to the museum in the year 2000.

This friend, my senior by about half a year; turned out to be a member of German nobility: Ralph Freiherr von Falkenstein, always a hater of the Nazi regime.

He did get in touch with a lady on the museum's staff, Leonore Maier, with whom I had arranged that the towel be exhibited there, and to my great surprise this M.K.-(Margarete Kuttner) embroidered towel had been written up in the German press as well as in the museum's house organ by its director, Michael Blumenthal, and it was even mentioned on German TV, where my friend Ralph from the 1930s saw it. Immediately he got in touch with Ms. Maier, included a letter and some photos of himself for me, and almost sixty-four years after I last saw Ralph in Berlin in 1938, we could finally contact each other again.

He had still visited my mother in Berlin in the summer of 1939, when I was already in England, but a couple of years later his attempts to get in touch with her at the Uhland Strasse address met with no success. Nobody ever answered his ringing her doorbell (being not Aryan, my mother was forbidden to have a telephone).

Probably by that time she had already been picked up by the Gestapo and sent to Auschwitz, where she was gassed in 1944. Ralph's family had always detested Hitler's regime and was actually involved in the attempt on his life in July 1944. After the war Ralph became a man of the cloth, retiring from his religious duties in 1998, and now, in his eighties, lives in Hamburg, my mother's place of birth.

ELISABETH LANDMANN MUST BE HONORED. (1939)

In retrospect I have to admire the Jews and non-Aryans living in Germany in the 1930s, who had the foresight to see the writing on the wall and emigrate soon after Hitler came to power in early 1933. I was only ten years old at the time and more concerned with my Latin and Greek exams at Berlin's Bismarck Gymnasium than in the man who sported a Chaplin mustache and blamed Germany's ills on its Jewish citizens, who at least then did not even amount to as much as one percent of its entire population, or 600,000 out of a total of 65 million people.

I still remember the four-hour march of Hitler's SA and SS troops parading past my school friends and me at a water fountain for horses at the corner of Regensburger Strasse and Prager Strasse in Berlin's Wilmersdorf district, two blocks from where I lived with my mother and sister in our five-room Kaiser Allee (now Bundes Allee) apartment. It impressed me enormously, especially the occasional goosestepping hordes stretching for miles and miles until they reached the Tempelhof airfield, where they listened by the million over the radio to Hitler's speech promising Germany a place in the sun and blaming all the ills of the world on the Jews and Communists. Personally I knew very few Jews my age, neither in my class nor as playmates on the street where I spent most of my free hours, when I did not engage in my hobby of fretwork, read some Karl May or Erich Kästner novels, or had to do my homework for school.

At the time I also belonged to an outfit called "Pfadfinder," which was the German equivalent of the Anglo-American Boy Scout movement. Once a week we met in a room of the building adjacent to the Hohenzollernplatz church, just a few minutes' walk from us, and there we learned how to survive in inclement weather out in

the wild and how to tie knots and read maps, or we sang scouting songs, and half a dozen times a year we went on overnight week-end trips to the nearby Grunewald area outside Berlin and here we slept in tents near the Havel river, always having the most wonderful, adventurous times, but when, around 1936, the Boy Scout movement was finally absorbed into the Hitler Youth we had to provide not only our own official baptismal certificates, but those of our parents and grandparents. They had to be verified by the local authorities and it goes without saying that such papers could not be issued to me and I, in turn, could not present these documents to the Nazi youth organization. Consequently, my transfer from the Boy Scouts to the Jungvolk and Hitler Youth movements became automatically invalid. Even Christian children as well as their baptized parents could not join any Nazi organization, so long as their grandparents had not been baptized; it meant that even the two baptized generations were "branded" as Jews, according to Hitler's Nuremberg Racial Laws of 1935 and, not surprisingly, these two baptized generations also ended up half a dozen years later in such death camps as Bergen-Belsen, Auschwitz, Dachau and Treblinka, being considered Jews by the Nazis and, correctly, as Christians by the Jews. There were no organizations helping those first- and second-generation Christians, the non-Aryans.

Of course, Jews and non-Aryans could no longer get married to Aryans in Nazi Germany and even the friendship between Jews and non-Jews was forbidden, certainly fowned upon. Jewish lawyers and medical doctors could only have Jews as their clients and patients, but with many Jews and non-Aryans emigrating, these two professions could hardly sustain themselves financially under the Nazis, especially after Hitler had confiscated their bank accounts. In the 1930s tens of thousands of German Jews and non-Aryans were sent to

concentratio camp for no reason other than that they were not "Aryans," and all of them were tortured and starved there until the Nazis released them several months later under the condition that they make a serious effort to emigrate with their families. Such a feat would have been relatively simple if non=German nations had willingly accepted these helpless victims. But virtually no country did, claiming their own dire economic plight. Jewish stores in Germany and Austria for the most part in the late 1930s were destroyed during the 1938 progroms or confiscated without restitutional payment. Meanwhile the rabidly anti-Semitic hate-sheet "Der Stürmer" was displayed publicly on many city streets in specially erected showcases, and of course after 1938 all Jewish and non-Aryan children were removed from school and it proved to be almost impossible to register these evicted boys and girls in schools catering only to Jews.

My sister Annemarie, born in 1912, was ten years older than me (a baby-boy born between Annemarie's birth and mine had died soon after it was born) and fortunately she had already graduated from high school (Cecilien Lyzeum) by 1930 and become a dental assistant by the time I had entered my secondary school, the Bismarck Gymnasium, in 1933 at the age of ten. Consequently I could remain in that high school in Berlin's Pfalzburger Strasse until a few days after "Kristallnacht" (Night of the Broken Glass) in November 1938 when the superintendent there, Dr. Voelkle, summoned me to his office, informed me of my dismissal from school, then guided me back to my classroom and discharged me in front of the entire class as "an enemy of the people" ("ein Volksfeind"), a most humiliating experience for a boy in his midteens, since all eyes were trained upon me when I had to pick up my belongings, my school books, satchel, top coat, in front of my stunned class-

mates, without being permitted to say good-bye to any of them.

(Decades later, in the 1980s, I learned from one of my closest school friends, Klaus Brockerhoff, that Dr.Voelkle was killed in the Volkssturm in defense of Berlin, aged 70, a few days before the German capital fell to the Red Army.)

Of course, my mother and sister as well as I had tried desperately for a couple of years already to emigrate to other European countries as well as to the U.S.. We filled out dozens of forms at half a dozen consulates and had to bring our personal documents with us, such as birth and school certificates, proof of religion, and police papers that we had never been arrested for any crime, and at each of these consulates in Berlin we had to wait for hours and hours outside in rain, snow, slush and heat in endless lines until it was our turn to plead our case with an air of hopelessness to some office flunkie, who over the years had become bored by the eternal lines of desperate people and their tragic testimonies of plight, anguish and misery. But at every consulate we heard the same story: we'll put you on our lists, but there are thousands and thousands of other unfortunate people like you who had already registered months, even years before, and they, naturally, have priority and are also still waiting.

We were especially heartbroken when the Dutch consulate appeared to be most helpful and optimistic, promising us that we could emigrate in a year or two, but when my mother called their office in late 1938 in order to find out whether it would be our turn at long last to emigrate and reside in their country, she was told that our papers had mysteriously disappeared and we would have to return and register again, although now the waiting period to enter the Netherlands had been extended to about five years.

Of course, in retrospect, this denial to let us enter a country like Holland, France or Belgium proved to be a blessing in disguise since my entire family, including me, undoubtedly would have ended up in a concentration camp, very much like the entire family of Anne Frank in Nazi-occupied Holland, which perished in extermination camps several years later, except for Anne's father, Otto. Nevertheless, each European consulate in Berlin gave us the same excuse: the German immigration-quota was oversubscribed and we would have to wait for years to enter their country legally (there were relatively few illegal flights by the endangered Jews into neighboring countries.)

We did not fare any better in the British and American consulates, where we were given the same excuse in spite of our pleas that all of us might end up in Nazi concentration camps and be killed there for no other reason than the fact that my grandparents had never been baptized, never mind our own generation. Again, these pleas fell on deaf ears since it was not up to the officials we spoke to but their governments hundreds of miles away, which determined the immigration quota from Nazi Germany. Naturally, these distant bureaucratic clerks did not feel any of the anguish, the constant fear, that gripped our hearts with an iron clamp day and night.

The British consular officer simply told us that with all the unemployment in Great Britain at the time, it was not wise to let foreigners enter their country, swelling the rolls of the unemployed, but of course our names would be considered in due course. We asked what "due course" implied and were informed that it could mean eight months or eight years. But our names would remain on their lists of those to be considered for immigration one day.

A similar procedure was repeated when we registered at the U.S. consulate after waiting outdoors in a long line of hopefuls in a heavy downpour,but finally we were informed that our number to enter the States probably would come up in six to eight years, sometime around 1945,since the German immigration quota was heavily over-subscribed, allowing a total of only 25,000 immigrants per year, and because half of these prospective immigrants were not even Jewish and in no danger of annihilation, we simply had to bid our time and be patient. Later I learned that in contrast to the German quota,the Austrian quota to enter the U.S. after the 1938 Anschluss was relatively bigger and few Austrian refugees, hopeful to join friends and relatives in America,had to wait longer than half a year. Interestingly, Hitler admired only one American so much, he actually mentioned him even in his "Mein Kampf" - - the Jew-hating Henry Ford: "Only a single great man, Ford,to their (the U.S.Jews) fury, still maintains full independence."

After Hitler had invaded Austria in March 1938, much to the delight of most Austrians, a non-Aryan Viennese friend of mine, Anne Polte, could enter the U.S. within a month after registering at the American consulate in Vienna,but since she still wanted to attend the wedding of a friend the following month she remained another eight weeks in Vienna and then arrived in New York in the summer that same year, 1938. Other members of her family were not that lucky; they died in the Holocaust.

My father, who had married Ida Kaspar, an Aryan, in 1925,three years after my birth,fared no better than other Jews and non-Aryans in Berlin,even though he had won the Iron Cross First Class in WWI and suffered a stroke in 1936 that rendered him unable to continue his medical practice and provide child support for Annemarie and me. Both my mother and stepmother, at their respective Berlin flats on Kaiser

Allee and Kurfürstendamm, now were compelled to rent out rooms to lodgers to survive financially.

Things looked bleak for the entire Kuttner family. My father's two brothers, Otto and Ernst, both of them medical doctors, met a similar fate. Ernst, in Lower Silesia, committed suicide, unable to support his family when he could treat only Jewish patients, most of which had emigrated (like my mother's brother Max, who had shot himself for the same reason) and Otto emigrated with his family to Canton, China, where he died a few years later of cancer.

All of us were caught in a bind. We were deprived, for the most part, of our livelihood, yet other countries did not even consider letting us settle there for many years to come. That is, until one day, in December of 1938, a month after the horrendous Crystal Night progrom and my dismissal from school because of Hitler's rabid anti-Semitic laws, our frontdoor bell rang shortly after my mother, sister and I had returned, depressed and despondent, from one of the consulates, and a woman in her forties introduced herself to us as Frau Elisabeth Landmann. She was Aryan but claimed to be sympathetic to the fate the Jews and non-Aryans were suffering under the Nazis. She had also heard through the grapevine that my mother had a son under the age of 17 and that she was certain she could help that son (me) emigrate to England the following year, 1939. Frau Landmann wanted to know whether Frau Kuttner was willing to give up her son to live in England, although there was always the possibility that she and her daughter Annemarie could follow her son at a later date to England.

Within seconds Frau Landmann was offered some ersatz coffee (which like so many other food items had already been rationed to Jews and non-Aryans for years) and a couple of breakfast rolls (stale ones, since only Aryans were entitled to buy fresh bread and rolls) and all this was dished up immediately for Frau Landmann in my room, where my family always consumed its meals.

trips, later be known as the
Within minutes we learned about the Kindertransport, the children's transports the British government had agreed to provide to German, Austrian and Czech boys and girls 16/or 17 years of age or younger, who were not Aryan. However, since no adults were included in this specially passed law by the House of Commons in London after the bloody Crystal Night, which had incensed the whole civilized world, it would mean that neither my mother nor my sister could emigrate to England with me. ~~Of course, Frau Landmann assured me, that possibly in a year or two my mother and sister could follow me to Great Britain.~~

My mother, sister and father had been the three greatest loves throughout my entire life (and my son decades later) and I turned down the proposal immediately (having just turned 16), unable to accept life without them. My mother grabbed my right hand and tears welled in her and my sister's eyes, but within seconds she told Frau Landmann that she would agree to see me living safely in a free society where I would not run the danger of ending up in a Nazi concentration camp.

All this took place just days before Christmas 1938, although at the time Frau Landmann could not give us an exact date yet when my turn would come to leave ~~in 1939~~ with the next Kindertransport.

On that fateful occasion, of course, nobody realized yet that less than nine months later World War II would break out and prevent my German parents from following me, like countless other parents, to England and safety. But regardless of how long I would have to wait until it was my turn to leave for England, we prepared a small suitcase with my most basic and necessary belongings, such as a shirt, sweater, a suit, pajamas,

two towels, some underwear, and a new pair of shoes, since the Nazi government decreed that we were permitted to take only twenty pounds of our personal belongings with us to England.

(At this point an interesting sidelight: The night before I left Nazi Germany, my mother had washed and ironed the towels for me; they actually were her own personal towels, identified with a large red-embroidered MK - for Margarete Kuttner - but I had deliberately never used the towels, because I wanted to keep something of hers that still had her fingerprints on it, with both towels being folded the way she had ironed them the night before my departure. But finally, after 62 years, in 2001, I parted with one of them, sending it to the newly erected Jewish Museum in Berlin, where it is now forever being exhibited with a full description of the towel's provenance just a couple of miles from where she had ironed it for me. This was especially written up in the museum's magazine by its director, Michael Blumenthal, who at one time had been the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury under President Carter. A photo of the towel accompanied the article. The second of my mother's towels is now at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.)

However, after packing my basic belongings came the period when I had to wait week after week for the green light to embark for England and in that interval I hardly ever left my mother's side except to visit my ailing father on the Kurfürstendamm, but in those nerve-racking weeks, soon turned into months.

The Christmas and New Year's season that year proved to be for me, for my entire family, a season of sorrow, no more and no less joyful than Hanukkah and any other religious festival for my persecuted family. Religion meant more and more to my mother as she

clung desperately to the hope that God would save us from the Nazi yoke, and it meant less and less to me, who had seen the murderous writing on the wall, and a fury directed at the Almighty possessed me that He would allow such Hitlerian bestialites/without so much as lifting a divine finger.

I loved the verdant fragrance of firtrees and insisted that my mother buy a small tree/for the December holidays, which she did, knowing it probably would be the last wish she could fulfill for me, and my mother and sister watched me as I decorated it with angel's hair and small white and red candles, but we had made up our minds not to buy presents for each other but just to hold hands and embrace one another and try to forget the sinister Nazi brutalities/lapping outside, the shores of the Kuttner household. That season remains a decorative memory, which keeps hanging on to me with a nostalgic stubbornness for well over sixty years now, particularly the woodsy fragrance of the pine needles, even the flickering candles live on obstinately in my heart, my mind, my soul.

My memory also conjures up, ever so often, our merrily singing green canary "Hänschen", peeping his heart out at the sight of the tree and burning candles, his own Ode to Joy. And on Sunday mornings, my mother, Annemarie and I

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made it a point to have our summer breakfasts on the balcony in the back of the house, hidden by the high green fleshy home-grown plants I baptized "Iceflowers" because they flourished even during the worst of Berlin's snowstorms. Naturally during the latter part of the Thirties we discussed our future in this thorny country of ours, often till deep into the night, hoping against hope that somehow the Hitler government would be overthrown.

In retrospect, having made it into my eighties now, I can claim without a sense of embarrassment that I never loved anybody as much as my mother, sister and father, because their love for me proved to be limitless and there has not been a single day in my life since our farewell in the Berlin of 1939 that I have not thought of these closest family members of mine with the greatest longing, affection and sadness. Finally, all those spilled tears/originated simply because of the degenerate ideas and mangled bodies of a housepainter with a Chaplin mustache and his depraved army of balloon-headed savages.

But at last/the inevitable did happen, much too quickly I thought: the telephone call from Frau Landmann early in February 1939. I should be ready, my mother was informed, for my trip to England/on February 8 at 6 a.m., which was exactly three days away, or actually only two-and-a-half days since we were informed to that effect only in the evening of February 5.

Annemarie, of course, did not go to work on those last days of mine in Berlin, nor on February 8 when she and my mother took me by cab to Berlin's Charlottenburg railroad station, a bitterly cold day.

For the life of me I can't remember exactly what we three did on those two-and-a-half days before my departure, except that on February 6 I visited my invalid father and his wife Ida for the very last time. For me it was a horrible experience to bid adieu to my father because I knew that of my two parents he'd be the one I'd definitely never see again since he had been the victim of that horribly debilitating stroke in 1936 that left his entire right side paralyzed and it was obvious to anybody, including my father, that he would never be given a chance to immigrate in to a foreign country in that sorry condition. More than 60 years later I can still see him standing in the numbing cold on the balcony (which exists to this day on the second floor of the Kurfürstendamm 72 building), supporting himself on his cane, sobbing, then leaning against the wall of the balcony and waving his final farewell to me with his cane. I turned the corner finally, but after a few steps I retraced my way back to the Ku'damm to wave to him once more, but he was gone. Ida had not joined him on the balcony, I was told decades later by my sister, because she wanted him alone to be the last memory I had of them, and to this day I do deeply appreciate her for this long-ago sentiment.

I wept bitterly walking home in the snow and only slept fitfully that night, but I did call my father once more the next day, wanting at least one more time to hear his voice and say goodbye to him and his wife on that very last occasion.

Of that last day in Nazi Berlin, the only thing I remember is saying good-bye to some of my friends in my apartment, since I did not intend to leave my mother's and sister's side - - friends such as Jurgen Franke and his mother; Erna; Dr. Brustmann, my doctor, who also lived at Kaiser Allee 26. He

never made any bones about being a Nazi and had joined Hitler's SA troops already in the 1920s, well before the Führer had become chancellor, but even so he did embrace me, wishing me a long healthy life, adding perplexed: "This is the one thing I can't understand," meaning of course the persecution of the Jews and non-Aryans, the incredible government-sponsored escalation of anti-Semitism in Germany that only a few months earlier had culminated in the destruction of Jewish shops, factories and the actual murder of Jews on the streets of German villages and towns.

I could also still say farewell to my best friends Atti Speyer (an Aryan boy a year older than me, who hated the Nazis), Klaus Brockerhoff und Hans Friese, with whom I went to school, and other boys who had joined the Hitler Youth but stuck it by me regardless of consequences, such as Erich Hirsch, Fritz Hellms, Hasso von dem Bussche and Dietrich Philipp; virtually all of them have died, although Erich is still alive, an uncommonly handsome and intelligent man with a most beautiful wife. He is still a terrific bsuinessman, who owned a hacienda in Middle America. Everybody had lost touch with the totally non-political Friese who was a genius at designing radios, and then became a MIA corporal in the Soviet Union. The anti-Nazi Atti was killed shortly before the end of WWII by the Russians in the Volkssturm in the defense of Berlin, and Klaus, to whose class reunion near Hamburg in his lovely home in Kirchlinteln I was invited in October 1992, died unexpectedly of cancer in 1998 a couple of months after the disease had been identified. For decades he had worked as a VW representative in northern Germany. His darling wife Antonie followed her husband into death in 2001.

A couple of other prewar items are worth mentioning since they affected every non-Aryan: First, as fate would have it, I was lucky enough to escape the hellish Nazi ordinance, stipulating that forthwith all Jews and non-Aryans must bear a large Star of

David that was securely stitched and plainly visible on all their clothing, coats, jackets, shirts and blouses. Moreover, a few months before my departure from Nazi Germany, Jews and non-Aryans could sit only on park-benches painted yellow with the legend: For Jews Only. And the shopping hours for these "Untermenschen" were limited to two hours a day, from 4 - 6 in the afternoon. Of course, theaters, movie houses and museums were altogether out of bounds to them and their radio sets ended up by being confiscated by the Nazis. (TV did not exist yet.) Even though the Jews' savings accounts had been confiscated as well by the German government in November 1938, a fine for the Jews' "insolence" of residing in Germany was imposed upon them, and as far as travelling inside the Third Reich was concerned, they could only do so by receiving written permission from their local police precinct, an authorization that was rarely granted. Subways and buses were still available to Jews, but even in a partially empty bus or tramway, they were not permitted to take a seat. Naturally none of these demeaning conditions can compare with the indignities the Jews suffered during the famous (or infamous) Kristallnacht, the Night of the Broken Glass, in November 1938; and here one horrifying spectacle comes to mind that I happened to witness from the balcony of my father's place at Kurfürstendamm 72 when a gang of brown-shirted hooligans had seized a girl who could not have been older than ten or eleven. Obviously she was Jewish since this gang of hoodlums constantly shouted "Judas, verrecke!" ("Jew-bastard, drop dead!"). A large crowd had gathered as one of the burly men threw a rope high up over the crossbeam of a lantern post and wound the other end of the rope tightly around the bitterly crying girl's neck, where it was securely fastened. A couple of women stepped forward protesting what they

feared was going to happen, but when one of the hoodlums smashed his fist into the woman's face the other lady shrunk back and retired silently. The crowd, and I on the balcony, watched in horror when these young Nazi bums simply strung the struggling young girl up as she tried vainly to loosen the rope around her neck. The muttering crowd grew totally silent, some turned away, others literally rushed from this scene of horror, and finally the girl in her white stockings and red overcoat with a white fur collar stopped struggling for air, for her last breath; and then quite suddenly all her natural sphincters opened up and a thin greenish-yellow rivulet of urine began to slowly make its hesitant way down one of her white stockings, ending up in her right lacquered/black shoe. Whether her neck finally broke or she simply choked to death, I don't know, but this dreadful scene has unfortunately been engraved forever in my conscious, and even though I was on a balcony maybe thirty or forty yards away and only in my midteens I often wonder whether I could have prevented this disaster. Most likely not. At least not against those half-dozen Nazi bullies, and if they had found out about my non-Aryan heritage I probably would have ended up right next to the girl in the red coat.I do not even recall what that little darling looked like; what I remember most of all is that thin line of urine running down her white stockings. I have no idea where her parents were at the time, how the gang of Nazis found out she was Jewish, and it goes without saying that there was no mention of it in next day's Nazi newspapers or in any report by the foreign press. She simply became a statistic of the dozens and dozens of Jews murdered in Nazi Germany that day. No fuss. No big deal.

Another item that affected me personally occurred the evening before

my departure for England in 1939 when my mother, sister and I simply held hands and wept, without speaking, in my room, on occasion hugging and kissing each other and my mother exhorting me always to be polite, responsible, clean and honest, whatever the future had in store for me.

Suddenly, around nine in the evening, when we were finally about to go to bed because we had to get up at about four in the morning to make it in time to Berlin's Charlottenburg railroad station, the frontdoor bell rang and a huge, muscularly built man in an SS uniform stood in our doorway, explaining that the SS had been informed of my impending departure from the Reich and that it was his duty to examine my suitcase to make sure I wouldn't abscond with any confidential papers or valuables to which I was not entitled as a racially inferior person.

Upset and frightened by this latest Nazi-bully tactic, my mother let the man in and introduced him to Annemarie and me.

We were ordered to open my suitcase and empty its contents on my bed, which we did. He then read the table of contents, which we were informed to produce in duplicate in handwriting (since we also had had to surrender our typewriter to the Nazi authorities a couple of months earlier) and he forthwith ticked off all the items that had been packed earlier by us, such as the shirt, pair of socks and my underwear.

Satisfied that I would not flee Hitler's paradise with bricks of gold and official Nazi state-secret documents, except for the ten Reichsmarks the German government permitted me to take along, he produced a rubberstamp and stamp-pad from the pocket of his SS jacket and applied the stamp to one copy of the lists of contents as a sort of official seal of approval and pasted it on top of my suitcase while pocketing the other list for his governmental office, I suppose. To boot, my mother had to pay him

ten Marks for his services and he departed with the obligatory "Heil Hitler."

For some psychological reason I tried to block out the final departure and goodbyes to my mother and sister at the railroad station well before dawn the following day, February 8, 1939. All I remember is the three of us walking down the deserted Kaiser Allee to the corner of Trautenau Strasse, where a taxi-stand was located, and taking a cab in the bitter cold to the Charlottenburg railroad station.

We spoke very little on the way - - what was there left to say or discuss? - - but at the station we just stood there and cried our hearts out and hugged each other non-stop, like the rest of the other youngsters, boys and girls, who like me bade farewell to their loved ones. I distinctly recall the salty taste of my mother's and sister's tears on their cold cheeks, with my small suitcase at our feet. My mother had to finally push me away, so that I could step into the train before its departure from Berlin. I rushed to the window and saw my two darling women on the platform with dozens of other parents and family members wave good-bye just as the train pulled out of the station. The figures of my mother and sister became smaller and smaller until the train made its curve out of the terminal and the two disappeared from sight altogether. Only in my mind, in my heart , do I still carry this tragic winter picture of my loved ones, having it scorched forever into my memory bank, my soul, for more than sixty years, still as cinematographically three-dimensional today as it was in February 1939.

But this particular train, in which we children of the Kindertransport sat pale, intimidated and scared to death, was completely sealed off to the outside world. Not a single door could be

opened from the inside and each car of the train had a contingent of SS men on board, parading with their revolvers up and down the corridor outside our compartments and sometimes entering them, eyeing us suspiciously to make sure that none of us youngsters entertained the heinous idea of opening a window and trying to escape into the open countryside to make the return journey by foot to the glorious Nazi capital.

Of course, nobody ever did, although there is the case on record when a father literally lifted his daughter out of the window of the train while it was already in motion and beginning to pull out of the station, because he could not bear being separated from her, with the result that the girl in the end survived the war in a Nazi concentration camp while her father was killed in it.

But at least God granted me the favor of seeing my beloved sister again, on December 8, 1947, almost 9 years later, in New York, until God, to my eternal puzzlement, decided that I had enjoyed her long enough and He wrenched her out my arms in a most cruel and diabolical way by torturing her to death with bone cancer and finally taking her forever from me and her husband Joe in New York on September 22, 1964.

As a postscript I can add that I saw Elisabeth Landmann, who made my escape to England possible in 1939, once more in London during the war, although, oddly enough, that meeting, its whereabouts and how it came about, have completely faded from my mind. Later I heard that she had emigrated to the U.S., but even though I tried my damndest to obtain her address I could never trace her anywhere in the States to once more say Thank You to her.

In retrospect it seems like an unsung tragedy that the U.S. of the 1930s, with just about 125 million inhabitants, could not

absorb a mere 300,000 German refugees who were clamoring and begging to be rescued from certain annihilation at the hands of the Nazi barbarians while today, with almost 300 million inhabitants, the United States, without blinking an eye, lets in a million legal and illegal immigrants every year who, for the most part, are in no dire economic plight and certainly are not confronted by death and firing squads as the German Jews and non-Aryans were in the 1930s.

Today, services for Russian and Latin-American immigrants cost the U.S. taxpayer 18 billion dollars annually, bilingual education now doubles the cost of schools in the U.S., which it never did in the past; immigrants now collect Medicaid benefits 64% more often than native Americans; immigrants today are 50% more likely tp get welfare than citizens of the U.S., with a full 75% of the immigrants more likely to obtain food stamps and medical benefits today than indigenous citizens.

True, economic conditions today are better in the States than they were in the 1930s, but the 300,000 death candidates in Nazi Germany were turned away at U.S. consulates with the full knowledge of what fate awaited them in the camps. Take a look again at Katherine Anne Porter's "Ship of Fools" with its band of refugees being refused entry into the U.S. by American government authorities and returned, for the most part, at least to certain death in Nazi concentration camps.

What a propaganda victory that rejection turned out to be for Hitler, especially when Dr.Goebbels's Nazi propaganda machine could proclaim truthfully that nobody really wanted those wretched Jews - - so what was all the fuss about when they killed a few thousand of them once in a while!

No wonder Washington had often been accused of sharing in some

of the responsibility for the Final Solution which Hitler had publicly threatened with the most dire consequences for the Jews in his early 1939 speech in case the Western powers dared to stop Nazi Germany's demand for more Lebensraum (living space).

In fairness, it should be pointed out that the United States did accept approximately one thousand unaccompanied Jewish refugee children from Germany and Austria between 1939 and 1945, arriving in the States by way of England, China, Russia and other countries and then staying in the U.S. with foster families. Most of these children learned much later, like the boys and girls of Great Britain's Kindertransport, that their parents had perished in the Holocaust.

Officially, though, only the government in London took pity on the plight of German and Austrian Jews and non-Aryans when they permitted almost ten thousand of those two countries' refugee children under the age of 17 to enter Great Britain in late 1938 and through August of 1939, including this writer -- the policy known as the Kindertransport.

Meanwhile tens of thousands of other children were, unfortunately, not so lucky to make it safely to England and virtually all of them ended up in the mountains of bones found by the Allies at the end of the war in Belsen, Auschwitz and other Nazi concentration camps.

Were all of the prisoners Jews? Certainly not. Many of them were anti-Nazis, homosexuals, the mentally deficient. At the same time, vast numbers of the victims were the never-mentioned so-called "non-Aryan Christians," who also perished in the Holocaust, not because they were in danger as Christians but because they were in danger of what the Nazis referred to as "first- and second-generation baptized Jews."

A ROUGH RIDE TO FREEDOM (1939)

It depends on the individual characteristics of those in captivity - and we youngsters on that train leaving Nazi Germany considered ourselves to be captives of the SS guards - how they react to fear and danger when unusual pressure is applied to them. The seven boys and girls sharing my railroad compartment certainly did not exhibit any signs of joy or relief that all of us were finally on the verge of departing from Hitler's territorial prison. Certainly the presence of the black-uniformed SS brutes outside our compartment had an intimidating effect on each one of us, although by the same token I had heard from other members of a later Kindertransport group in the summer of 1939 that those youngsters starting out in Hamburg entertained themselves immediately with songs and card games. Unfortunately, such pastimes did not occupy the minds of my young co-patriots.

I concentrated instead for a good couple of hours on past events of a happier nature involving the loved ones I was forced to leave behind and for those three hours my inner daydreaming memories proved to be better railroad companions than my plainly intimidated fellow travellers.

Nevertheless, our trip through Germany to the Dutch border went largely without a hitch. Almost two hundred boys and girls happened to be in my transport - one of the largest Kindertransports - and, as explained earlier, we were quite subdued on that final journey through Nazi Germany, its northern part, at least until we reached the border of Holland early in the afternoon. Most of us realized that it might be the last time we'd ever see Germany, our native country, again. Meanwhile, whenever one of us youngsters

in our unheated railroad compartment went outside to walk down the narrow corridor of the D-Zug, as the Germans referred to such trains, in order to reach the lavatories at each end of the railroad cars, one of the SS men, who had been stationed there, barked at us that we "Judenschweine" (Jew-pigs) should leave the train's bathrooms in clean and sanitary condition, while another one of those black-uniformed giants yelled at us boys that the time for raping good German girls was over and a matter of the past. Naturally, the threatening presence of these Nazi bullies in their twenties and thirties did intimidate us. They could have used their pistols and killed any of us at their pleasure without fear of judicial consequences, but fortunately none of them ever did on those Kindertransports.

By the time our young crowd reached the Dutch border, we were famished. None of us were permitted to take more than one sandwich out of Germany, so as not to deprive its Aryan citizens of their nourishment. Not surprisingly, our growing bodies were starved by the time the hour of lunch rolled around. Of course, there was no diner on the train and only in the lavatories could we slurp handfuls of water from the dripping cold-water faucets.

At the Dutch-German border, in a village called Bad Bentheim, one of the most gigantic SS men burst into our compartment and snapped at us that we should take our suitcases out of the luggage-net and follow him quickly and quietly. We grabbed our belongings and put on our winter overcoats, then followed the SS Standartenführer obediently down the aisle to the train's exit door. We descended the steep steps of the railroad train on to the station platform, where a huge swatika flag was snapping briskly in the wind. When we stood in long

rows, silent and shivering, on the snow-filled platform, the SS officer screamed at us to honor the Nazi flag with the "Heil Hitler" salute.

We had nothing to lose, certainly didn't want to make any waves at those final minutes under the threat of the Nazi boot, and then we knew in any case that in just a little while we'd be in a free country - - Holland. Our arms shot up obediently and a railroad-station loudspeaker played the German Nazi anthem - the Horst Wessel song.

For a few more minutes we stood ramrod-stiff on the bitterly cold, drafty platform, and then the SS Standartenführer led all of us across a couple of platforms to a waiting Dutch train. Here we climbed silently with our modest belongings into our assigned railroad cars and entered our much-appreciated heated compartments, not uttering a sound since we were all too conscious of the fact that we were still on German soil.

Sitting there and staring at each other, in total silence, we waited anxiously for the train to move and take us across the border into the longed-for free country of Holland. We must have waited quietly and full of anguish for a good half hour or so, wondering what the SS had in store for us now at this fateful juncture when all of a sudden the compartment door was flung open with a loud metallic bang and the hateful SS officer made his latest appearance.

He told us quietly that the train's departure had been delayed for an additional few minutes, but that he wished us all a happy future - - a rather uncharacteristic remark coming from him.

One of the girls in my compartment, in an instant of sheer bravado, asked him why he suddenly appeared to be so kind when a

few minutes earlier he had been yelling at us that we were Jewish pigs.

In response, and to our horror, he removed the holster with his gun from his midriff, then reached deeply into his SS overcoat pocket and withdrew small packages of Sarotti milk-chocolate bars, distributed one package to each of us starving youngsters and explained in a hoarse whisper that having called us pigs had been for the benefit of the other SS men at the station and in the train, but that virtually all of them had left by now.

"Don't ask any more questions," he added quickly, but in a subdued voice. "I'm not what I seem. Good luck!"

With those few words he stepped back, out onto the train's corridor, shut our compartment's sliding door and seconds later appeared on the station platform, stopping near our window. We just sat there transfixed, staring at each other.

One of the girls ventured at long last whether the chcolate might be poisoned, but a young boy dismissed that opinion at once, tore his candy's wrapping from its contents and chewed the soothing milk chocolate bar with visible relish. Slowly, hesitantly, the rest of us followed suit, removed the candy's wrappings and also consumed the sweet comforting chocolate in a pensive mood, but then suddenly the train gave the long-awaited jolt and started to chug and puff slowly out of the German railroad station. We looked out on the snow-covered deserted platform - - deserted, that is, except for one man: our milk-chocolate SS officer, standing ramrod-stiff, a tiny smile curving his lips and whispering something none of us could decypher. He did not even appear to be aware of the rain that had started to come down rather heavily a few minutes earlier, just nodding to himself, focussing all his attention on the departing train - - our ride to freedom.

Finally,though, as the train slowly, almost laboriously, inched toward, then onto,Dutch soil, the steel-gray sky really opened up into a cosmic deluge, as though the heavens were weeping over our departure from our loved ones. We let the window down and peered out on the vanishing German station, with the tiny figure of the SS man still standing in the deluge, not moving, but then we shut the window again and,as if on cue,all of us started hugging each other. We had made it, we were free- - free at long last! Some of us broke into applause, a couple of girls actually began to sob, whether from relief that the nightmare was behind us or the realization that we might never see our loved ones again, I don't know, but for the next hour or two words of deliverance, of gratitude,tumbled nonsensically from our lips, incoherent sentences and sentiments about our families, our past, our future, bursting out of us like a dam overflowing and emptying a full reservoir of grief, of hurt and love and hatred, and we watched the verdant snow-covered countryside of Holland slip by and we laughed and wept.

At long last, though, the sun was setting - a huge red ball of fire gleaming on snowy thatched roofs of Dutch villages and lone farmsteads, and after we had changed trains at Utrecht and Rotterdam,we finally disembarked late at night on February 8, 1939 at Hoek van Holland, where the weather was blustery and raw. Still, since we hadn't had anything real solid to eat since leaving Berlin sixteen hours earlier, except for the tiny bars of chocolate and the sandwich from home,we were starved by the time we entered our cabin in the Channel=crossing steamer. Only then,all of us were provided with a truly sumptuous meal in the incredibly cold diningroom,and after that we could finally retire to our cabins to have a good night's sleep on our narrow, hard bunks. Exhausted as my roommate and I were, we soon fell asleep.

It must have been around two in the morning when I woke up. The boy, who was my age, sharing my cabin had the bunk above me and was actually stepping on my head, climbing down from his top bunk. I cried out in pain and demanded to know what he thought he was doing, but instead of giving me an answer, he turned on the cabin light, standing there stark naked, bending over the tiny cabin sink, and vomited into it. Within seconds, the sweet-sour stench of vomit filled the entire cabin, and I shot up in a sitting position to complain to him about this disgusting spectacle. But sitting up like this from a deep sleep resulted in my banging my head into the bottom-part of the bunk above me. Stars and lightning tumbled helter-skelter inside my head and I cried out in pain.

Ignoring my complaint, my roommate continued ceaselessly to throw up his entire evening meal into the sink, white as a sheet and tears of despair running down his cheeks. It probably did not even take me half a minute, but I simply could not tolerate the foul odor in this confined space

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any longer and hastily put on my suit over my pajamas in order to escape this hellish,stinking nightmare. Just the sight of the tiny sink overflowing with the boy's vomit was enough to turn my stomach. I ran down a long cofridor, dashed up the stairs to the deck which was pitch-black except for the stars and a cloud-covered moon,and here I deeply inhaled the icy ocean air. Somehow I was scared to return to the stench of my cabin, but the drizzle and the sharp biting winter air on the high seas soon gave me deep cause to realize that I would not be able to stand the cutting February cold much longer and I'd be compelled to return to my foul-smelling cabin. There were only a handful of other shivering boys and girls on the night-filled deck,but we did not exchange words, although I heard some of these youngsters throwing up into the sea. After about twenty minutes I decided to return to my reasonably warm cabin, hoping that my roommate had done with his job of throwing up.

True enough, he was lying in his top bunk again, evidently asleep, but the stench in the tiny cabin was unbearable. Still, I was frozen, dog-tired and homesick for my beloved family and craving the security of my bed at home - - in short: as miserable as a human being of my tender years could be.

The salty sea air somehow had made me thirsty and I wanted to get a drink of water from the sink. To my unspeakable horror I noticed now that the entire sink was clogged up and filled with my roommate's vomit to the point of overflowing and to top it some of his vomit had landed on the cabin floor. I hated that guy and threw myself badtempered and feeling wretched back on my bunk.

I must have lain there, angry and unhappy, for about ten or fifteen minutes, trying my darndest to fall asleep, parched as I was, when I became aware of an odd feeling in my mouth. I could not quite grasp the meaning of it, but all of a sudden I noticed something inside my mouth that felt like a carrot. I took it out of my mouth and, indeed, it turned out to be a small carrot. I sat up at the edge of my bunkbed and studied it incomprehensively. But to my horror, a few seconds later my mouth filled up again, this time with a number of peas. True enough, our nightmeal had consisted of roast beef with potatoes and carrots and peas. But that was hours ago, and only when more and more of my undigested food continued to fill up my mouth did I finally realize that I too had become seasick. At first, there was no discomfort of nausea, that is the reason why I was so puzzled by the dinner's reappearance inside my mouth. However, after a few minutes of this perplexing sensation I broke into a cold sweat, even though the cabin was really cool now, and seconds later I realized that I had fallen victim to the same inexplicable, sickening malaise that had struck my cabinmate an hour earlier.

I got up from my bunk and wanted to throw up into our sink when I remembered that my fellow-sufferer's vomit had already clogged up the sink to the point of overflowing.

I rushed out into the endlessly long passageway to make it up the steep stairs to the deck, but nature decided otherwise. Even though the British Channel was relatively calm, the tiny quick choppy waves had the effect on me as if I were standing in an elevator which stopped quickly and then shot up for a few inches before sinking six flights of stairs in three seconds. Trouble was, it repeated this stomach-churning routine over and

over again, seemingly endlessly, in a premeditated sadistic maniacal manner.

Outide in the long passageway I could no longer contain myself, could not even make it to the lavatories at the end of the nightmarishly long corridor, and the food came out of my innards, yellow and green, a stream of gooey slime in front of some fellow sufferers, who emerged all of a sudden from their cabins. I raced down the long hallway, becoming aware of other unappetizing stinking puddles of vomit, and one girl in flowery pajamas actually cleaned up her stream of vomit with what appeared to be a silk scarf or kerchief, but finally I did make it to the deck.

Here I saw clusters of boys and girls leaning over the balustrade, emptying their/stomachs rebelling into the indifferent dark ocean. I joined these/poor wretched souls/and now wished with all my heart that I could be on safe solid terra firma, in my own bed, tucked in lovingly by my sweet gentle mother.

It turned out to be one of the longest nights of my life: cold, miserable, sick to the stomach, smelly and wet from the ocean spray. Salty droplets ran down my vomit-caked icy cheeks and some of the youngsters next to me were crying, sobbing, cursing and throwing up violently hour after hour after hour.

The endless night finally, though, did come to an end when the distant firered sun peeked, grinning and indifferent, over the horizon and we young sadsacks retired beaten, wet, stinking and starving, to our foul-smelling tiny cabins. Here we changed shirts, staggered into the communal bathrooms and washed our faces and bodies with icy cold water, then climbed the steep stairs to the diningroom where we wolfed down a sumptuous breakfast of eggs, mashed potatoes and ham, that turned us miraculously back

into something resembling normal human beings. And being teenagers, we bragged during the meal about our stomachs having been sturdy enough to withstand the onslaught of the storm-tossed sea when one of the girls suddenly cried out that she saw land. All of us rushed to the bull's-eyes in the dinighall and in the foggy distance saw a dark ribbon of land standing majestically in the churning and choppy sea: Harwich! England! Freedom!

As if on cue, we burst into wild applause and chatted excitedly about our future, what we were going to do with the rest of our lives while at the same time gulping down the remnants of our breakfast. Nazi Germany suddenly seemed aeons away. The future,at long last,belonged to us! And still, in retrospect,today I do not remember the face of a single member of my own Kindertransport!

Nevertheless, in this connection it is historically interesting to note that between November 1938 and August 1939 the "London Times" brought up the subject of young refugees emigrating from the Nazis to England on almost twenty different occasions. However, the paper never referred to these procedures as "Kindertransports" (a term originating a while later), but as young refugees from Herr Hitler's country brought to a safe haven in England under its official title at the time: "The Movement for the Care of Children from Germany - The British Inter-Aid Committee."

And these transports ranged from as few as fifty to as many as five hundred children per trip, with the vast majority of these life-saving journeys, including my own case, being sponsored by the benign, selfless financial and social efforts of the under-appreciated Society of Friends, the Quakers. My heart goes out in gratitude to these unsung heroes forever!

MISERABLE BUT HAPPY. (1939)

It truly was a miserable day, weatherwise, when the Kindertransport finally docked with about three hundred of us "Kinder" aged sixteen and younger in the port of Harwich, England, on February 9, 1939. Fog now enshrouded the entire area; a wet, clammy cold gripped the port and only the seagulls circling above our vessel in the damp ocean-scented air seemed to enjoy the prospect of snapping up a few morsels of bread from our breakfast tables.

But there it was: England embracing us with open arms, at least symbolically. Because there were no relatives, no friends, no welcoming parties, no bands or officials waiting for us. Instead we were informed during breakfast on board the ship that we should follow a designated person to a nearby railway station, where all of us would be put on a train that was to take us to a London railway station (was it King's Cross or Charing Cross?). Here each of us youngsters would be met either by our sponsor or a temporary representative of said sponsor. For these representatives to recognize us as a member of the Kindertransport, each one of us was now handed a large identity card and this card identified us in large letters by name with some personal particulars typed underneath.

Obediently, apprehensively and quietly, we followed our Pied Piper. By bus we were taken to the nearest railroad station and climbed into incredibly crammed compartments, holding eight passengers each, and forthwith took our first English trip on terra firma to our London destination. The two-hour trip itself from Harwich to London proved unexciting; we just sat there, nibbling on the sandwich we had been given at the station and stared quietly out of the rain-splattered windows, ogling the de-

serted English countryside flit by and wondering what Fate would hold in store for us youngsters in the next few months.

Finally we arrived with our twenty /..-pound suitcases at the final stop, where all of us were supposed to be picked up by our sponsors or their representatives. Although I had been informed a few days before my departure from Berlin that I would first stay with a family named Atkinson prior to being sent off to a college somewhere in the county of Dorset in the south-west of England, I had no further informatiom regarding my future fate.

After we disembarked on that dismally cold,drizzly morning at our London station, my transport of almost three hundred children was met by a large number of adults who grabbed the identity cards, which were now fastened to our coats' lapels,to make sure that they were taking their own correct juvenile ward back home and not somebody else's. Some of these sponsors embraced their young /wards in a genuine gesture of warmth and sympathy, others stiffly just shook their hands, then departed the station with them.

The drizzle meanwhile had turned into a heavy downpour and we had to stand on that section of the railway platform that was not protected by the huge roof of the station about 50 or 60 yards further down.

To my horror and dismay,everybody finally had been picked up by their sponsors, that is everybody except for me.

There I stood in my new overcoat and suit with my small suitcase getting completely drenched by the rain,waiting to be mercifully picked up. Finally,though, I could stand it no longer and I advanced hesitantly to the dry protected part of the station.

To me it seemed all of London was hustling and bustling past me,totally ignoring my inconsequential presence and it occurred

to me, for a moment at least, that I did not know what to do if nobody came to pick me up. Would I be arrested for loitering? Or be sent back to Nazi Germany?

I sat down on my suitcase on the by now deserted platform, missing the secure haven of my Berlin apartment, especially the warmth and love of my mother (Margarete) and sister (Annemarie). What were they doing just then?

Tears welled in my eyes. My English at the time was so limited that I did not know how to express myself to explain my special case to the railroad personnel or even how best to address them.

I must have been sitting on my suitcase for a good half hour, despondent, shivering, lost and scared that I would starve to death before nighfall, when a middleaged man smelling of alcohol approached me on a pair of very unsteady legs, fingered my identification card and said something in an accent that most likely could only be characterized as the sort of pure Cockney Eliza Doolittle would have been proud of. The unshaven man offered me a toothless grin, took my suitcase and I followed him hesitantly and sheepishly, listening to his endless but friendly chatter until we reached his car in the downpour. I did not have the slightest idea where he would take me or who he was but had no choice but to rest my fate in his shaking hands.

While he continued his good-natured alcohol-soaked prattle, laughing and drooling in his car, I looked out of the window and to my surprise recognized one London landmark from newsreels: Buckingham Palace. The Union Jack fluttered forlornly in the drenching rain above the huge building and I knew the King was in London, just like me. I pointed the landmark out to my merry driver and he started to sing "Rule Britannia" off-key and

would not cease [illegible] his unbearable rendition of it until we came to a stop at another railway station, where we promptly alighted.

He grabbed my lapel at this juncture and to my surprise wrote something on my Kindertransport badge, then returned my suitcase to me and led me onto an outdoor platform, where he handed me a ticket. For about ten minutes we waited in the rain and when the train finally did arrive, he lifted me on board into a window seat, pointing to my badge, where he had written: "Get off in Dorchester."

I nodded to give him to understand that I understood his message. His arms and alcoholic vapors embraced me warmly and once more I was left to my own devices. I had no idea how long the trip would take - - thirty minutes or five hours - - but at least I was on the right train (I hoped), in the dry, although still sopping wet myself.

The train finally chugged out of the station, huffing and puffing again, and I stared out of the window hoping that I'd reach Dorchester in a matter of minutes. But these minutes dragged into an hour, then two hours, and I got scared that, maybe, I had missed Dorchester, where my sponsor or whoever I was supposed to stay with was to meet me on some other rainy platform.

Green meadows and farmhouses with thatched roofs once more alternated with fog-enshrouded distant villages and gently rolling hills and gradually the grayness seeped out of the doom-laden sky and a somber dusk began to drape itself over the verdant English countryside.

At first I was too scared to go to the bathroom, afraid I'd miss my station, but in the end nature demanded that I answer its call and it was only after I had left the toilet that I noticed the train had stopped and the word "Dorchester" brazenly stared back at

me in huge letters. I rushed to my compartment, grabbed my suitcase just when the train started to chug laboriously out of the station. In seconds I raced to the exit, jerked the door open, threw the suitcase out and jumped after it onto the platform as the train took on more and more speed. I landed on my feet but fell forward on the snow-covered ground, soaking my new pair of trousers. Ignoring the pain of my fall, I rushed back to pick up my suitcase, then sloshed hurriedly toward the protective roof of the station, which now was completely deserted except for me.

And there I stood, my new pants soaking wet and totally uncreased from the downpour, me in agony, the balls of my hands bleeding, and the platform itself absolutely desolate. By this time it was about five in the afternoon, a wintery dusk shrouded the station in semi-darkness, with a few forlorn yellow lightbulbs casting an eerie misty glow, and for the second time that day I was lost on some strange railway platform in a country whose language I did not master, with virtually no money on me, and - worst of all - not knowing what to do next.

I entered nevertheless a smoke-filled watm waitingroom, where a couple of grey-stubbled oldsters totally ignored me, smoking their Woodbines or Players, and I sat down shivering, cleaning up my bleeding hands, and waiting for anybody willing to take pity on me.

This time at least I did not have to wait very long when the squaaky portal of the waitingroom suddenly opened and a tall, middle-aged woman entered and approached me, twisting up the identity card I was wearing around my neck.

Immediately her ruddy face broke into a friendly, warmhearted smile and she introduced herself as Mrs. Atkinson. I un-

derstood just enough to make out that she and her husband lived in a neighboring village called Cattistock on the Holway Farm and that I would soon be sent to a college or public school that went by the name of Bryanston near Blandford in Dorset. Mrs. Atkinson had a small rather beat-up Morris and for the next half-hour or so she drove me through the dripping-wet and darkening countryside to her estate.

There I was introduced to her husband, a rather smallish portly man with a puckish crimson face and then she showed me to my room on the second floor, where a large fire was burning in the fireplace, spitting sparks harmlessly onto the fronting brick area and emitting a Christmassy fragrance of pine needles.

The bathroom was located at the other end of a long hallway and I used it immediately and asked in my broken English whether she would let me go to bed without supper since I was thoroughly exhausted. I pantomimed the words "sleep" and "tired" with yawns and shutting my eyes and resting my head in the palm of my hands. She nodded with a giggle, put a few more logs on the fire and after she had left I changed into my flannel pajamas that, thank God, had not been affected by the previous night's sickening episode in the ship's cabin, then collapsed into my new bed, and to my surprise, instead of going to sleep, burst into tears, missing my family, which seemed at that moment a million lightyears away, wishing desperately I could be back in their midst, Hitler or no Hitler. However, after a few minutes Morpheus generously took pity on me and seduced me into a deep unbroken slumber.

Amazingly, when I woke up, I found dear Mrs. Atkinson sitting by my side, trying to explain to me with the aid of a calendar that I had slept non-stop for thirty-six hours and that she had been

on the verge of calling a doctor, if I had not woken up before noon. My first urge, not surprisingly, was to rush to the bathroom, where I subsequently washed myself as quickly and thoroughly as I could because in spite of the bitter cold, the only water available was ice-cold. It woke me in the fraction of a second; at that time I did not shave yet, and after dressing, a maid arrived in my bedroom with a fully loaded breakfast tray. It truly turned out to be a most wonderful meal of fat country sausages and four huge eggs - - a luxury I had not experienced in my entire youth since such food items were strictly rationed to Jews and non-Aryans in Nazi Germany. On top of it, Mrs. Atkinson served me a large bottle of the most delicious apple cider I had ever tasted - - as sumptuous a nourishing meal as any I had ever tasted in my life.

Another attraction for me was the dainty Japanese container of tea. I had heard so much of the high quality of English tea that I filled my blue Wedgwood cup to the brim with a most mouthwatering enthusiasm, searching simultaneously for some cubes of sugar. What I found was a small sidedish of granulated sugar, and as was my habit in Berlin I heaped my usual two spoonfuls of it into my cup of tea and sipped from the delicious aromatic brew steaming into my nostrils. Within the flash of a second I shot out of my chair, repelled by the ghastly sea-watery taste of the brew. How could the world rave about English tea when it tasted so god-awful? But being a gracious guest and not wanting to offend my generous hosts by leaving a full cup of tea behind, I forced myself to swallow every drop of this dreadful drink, pinching my eyes close-shut to mentally blot out the horrible taste of it.

Later in my broken English, when bringing my tray downstairs

into the kitchen, I tried to explain to Mrs. Atkinson not to serve me any more tea since, even with the condiment of sugar, it tasted to me like the brine of the Atlantic. She asked me what sugar I was talking about and I pointed to the white little dish on the tray. She broke helplessly into a staccato cackle of laughter and gave me to understand that what I had added to my tea was not the balming sweetness of sugar but salt - - salt meant for my eggs. She hugged me maternally, calling me a poor dear,and promised to add a saucer of cube sugar next to my cup of tea in the future.

For supper - - or high tea as Mrs.Atkinson preferred to call it - - her husband, the proverbial country squire in jodhpurs, did not like to communicate much with his wife and most decidedly not with me, but his kindhearted wife made up for his silence and addressed me non-stop. I smiled obediently, nodding to everything she said but had no idea what subject matter she was discussing with me for the most part.

Finally, she and I went up to my bedroom where she proceeded to put a few more of the neatly stacked fat tree branches on the fire and then helped me to unpack and store my meager belongings in a chest of drawers. From her largely to me unintelligible comments I gathered she was surprised that I did not have more clothing in my suitcase;in turn, I tried to explain to her that the Nazis wouldn't let me take more of my personal belongings out of Germany.

To wean me away from my thoughts about my native country,she took me on a guided tour of her estate after we had armed ourselves with scarves,gloves and overcoats.It was dry outside but the soil was frozen stone-hard,and our first stop turned out to be a stable crammed to the point of bursting with the kind of

hunting dogs seen on old English prints. Within seconds, the fox-hounds yowled with delirious joy and surrounded us, leaping up on their hindlegs, slobbering our faces and wagging their tails in a wild frenzy, much like batons in the hands of mad musical conductors. This unexpected spectacle of genuine delight blew the web of my despair away in a jiffy. I felt warm and genuinely wanted in their untamed midst and reciprocated by dropping to my knees and hugging the strong hounds, a gesture that in turn drove them absolutely crazy with what appeared to me to be a delirium of happiness, as if they had never been shown such warmth and affection before.

Next, Mrs. Atkinson guided me to the other end of the estate and there I was confronted by something entirely unexpected: a huge cage holding three smallish monkeys. Mrs. Atkinson opened its gate a bit and slank into its interior, which was completely secured by an overhead fensed-in roof. She beckoned me to follow her and I understood enough of her English to grasp that these animals were not dangerous.

To my surprise the animals uttered high-pitched screams, whether of delight, amazement or suspicion I couldn't tell, but an instant after I had secured the lock on the inside of the cage, two of them jumped up on my shoulders, then on my outstretched arms while the third one nestled against the ample bosom of Mrs. Atkinson. Obviously, they craved companionship or affection on this desolate bit of land and they huddled against my chest seeking something resembling warmth in this raw winter weather. Mrs. Atkinson introduced them to me as Eeny, Meeny and Miny. She then proceeded to hand me some peanuts from her overcoat pocket, which I fed the greedy chattering little beasts while she repeated the same feeding method on the monkey huddling in her arm.

Only when we left the man-high cage, did the three monkeys trumpet their shrieks of protest that we were deserting them, before returning to the warm comfort of the Atkinson house.

For the greatest part of my days there, I huddled by the roaring fire in the sittingroom, poring over the multitude of words in my English-German and German-English Langenscheidt dictionary to pick up the most basic English expressions, or on the other hand I spent hours and hours at a table, writing endless letters to my family as well as to some of my friends in Berlin.

In retrospect, I do regret, even mourn the fact, that I discarded all my correspondence from Germany after answering it since I was absolutely certain that at least my mother and sister would join me in a matter of a year, hopefully even by Christmas of 1939 already.

They wrote me the most beautiful letters in response to mine, exhorting me at the same time always to be polite and industrious, although I was puzzled by the fact, about two or three months after my departure from Germany, that they had moved to another apartment in Berlin - - Uhland Strasse 114-115 - - only about ten minutes by foot from where we had lived at the Kaiser Allee address for about ten years. (After the war I learned from my sister that the anti-Semitic landlord at the old Kaiser Allee address had increased their rent by 400% when he had learned that we were not Aryan. Also, soon Kaiser Allee became out of bounds to Jews.)

In my broken beginner's English, I asked Mrs. Atkinson one morning whether she could help me in bringing my mother and sister to England. She promised that the next time she'd have to go on business to London she'd try to get information from the German consulate about the most expeditious way to help my family leave

Nazi Germany.

Days changed into weeks; I began to pick up more English, listening to the BBC and on occasion even to a German radio station (Deutschlandsender - Koenigswusterhausen) , which came through loud and clear with its transmissions to southern England.

One day, Mrs.Atkinson took me by car to another location in Dorset, to Blandford, where we drove through a huge portal and a mile or two down a forest-lined lone roadway, until we reached a majestic three-story-high palatial building, which, she explained to me, had once been owned by the Duke of Connaught, but which in the late 1920s had been converted into an English public school - - Bryanston School - - similar to Eton and Harrow.

Dozens of teenage boys milled around in sky-blue shorts, shirts and sweaters on endless corridors as Mrs. Atkinson led me to the headmaster's office. His name was Dr.Joad, a distinguished-looking man in his fifties, with tired eyes and a slow English drawl, who shook my hand warmly and ushered Mrs.Atkinson and me into his enormous sunflooded study with thousands of books filling shelf after shelf on each wall, reaching virtually all the way up to the top of his office, with only inches to spare under the ceiling.

Dr.Joad informed us that we would still have to wait a matter of weeks until an opening for me could be arranged. He offered us some tea and biscuits but did not guide us around the school for an inspection.

After we returned home, I retired to my bedroom and almost immediately began to dread the idea of having to live in this school, in an environment totally cut off from a friendly adult world that compassionately understood my difficulty in speaking and comprehending English. What bothered me especially was my inability

to communicate my fears to anybody mature enough to comprehend the depths of my misery, my loneliness. The black clouds of those inner terrors suddenly filled my entire being to the exclusion of everything else.

In fact, I felt more afraid of joining this school than I did when first arriving in England and staying with the Atkinsons. Because I knew that soon I'd be cut off from the outside world, completely on my own among ca. 300 uncaring, maybe sadistic boys, very much like the hero in "Tom Brown's Schooldays." How would I ever be able to convey my fears to anybody, my anguish in a language I was not conversant with, and even worse, what about the school lessons taught in a language still largely incomprehensible to me?

I became so depressed and felt so lonely and desperate now that a couple of days after my visit to Bryanston, while the Atkinsons were attending to their own busy schedule outside their home, I slank off to the only beings who were only too willing to listen to me, to my tearful silent cries of despair: my three darling monkeys.

I entered their cage, having first picked up half a loaf of bread in the Atkinson kitchen, plus a few boiled potatoes, and squatted down in their open-air cage on the frozen ground, handing out my morsels of bread and potatoes to them. Within seconds, Eeny, Meeny and Miny climbed into my lap, wolfing down my offering in tiny mouthfuls, and when I had nothing left to offer them they still clung to me, hugging me as though attempting to withdraw as much of my bodily warmth as possible and absorb it into their own Simian felt. Although it was bitterly cold, well below freezing, their physical closeness, in fact being their clinging embrace, literally saturated my with a kinship

of Darwinian cameraderie, of friendship, even (making me conscious of the first warmth, the first expression of real love on English soil. It all happened so unexpectedly that within seconds I began to cry.

Tears rolled down my frozen cheeks and the sluices of my pent up, unharnessed emotions burst wide open, causing me to sob, yes, literally sob my heart out. Whether the monkeys comprehended my state of loneliness and despair or whether they simply were grateful that they could warm their freezing bodies on my sorry person, I do not know, but they stared at me intently and clung to my squatting figure with a comradely strength, as if their lives, our future bonding, depended on it.

I kept on crying, actually I was literally crying out for my mother in German ("Mutti, hilf mir!") but, of course, there was no sign of life anywhere outside the cage except for the bare branches nodding sleepily in the frosty winter wind. Snowflakes began to float from the iron-grey sky, landing on my uncovered head; my hands were turning blue, and finally I got up with a heavy heart, leaving the desolate monkeys behind, chattering wildly and remonstrating, like any of God's creatures, feeling betrayed and let down that I was about to desert them.

The next morning, after I had fed the animals, Mrs. Atkinson informed me that she had received a letter from my college, stating I should report to the school because there had been a sudden, unexpected opening for me, and with a heavy heart I packed my few belongings and was driven to the college the next morning.

Only much later did I learn from a school friend at Bryanston that the sudden vacancy in the college was prompted by the dismissal of an Austrian student who had been caught in some sort of misdemeanor with another boy that was quite common in live-in public schools and would hardly raise an eyebrow today in a much

more lenient society. Evidently this unfortunate boy, I was given to understand, happened to be the grandson of a world-famous psychiatrist who was still alive at the time but then died of cancer of the jaw half a year later in London.

My introduction to Bryanston seemed to me more like a baptism of fire. It happened to be a late Sunday afternoon when the headmaster,Dr.Joad,into whose care I had been delivered by Mrs.Atkinson, took me by the hand and entered the communal center room,where about 300 chatting students and teachers were waiting for the weekly movie to start. (TV did not exist yet.) Instead, I was introduced to that huge crowd,which turned incredibly quiet,staring back at me, and to my unspeakable horror I heard Dr.Joad announce brightly that I would now address the school and tell them something about myself;in other words address this staring mob in a language that was still almost totally alien to me.

My knees buckled,turned to overboiled asparagus stalks, so that I had to get a good grip of the speaker's podium, but seconds later, all I could blurt out in my beginner's English was: "Thank you, pupils. I want to be your friend!"

There was a deafening silence. Six hundred eyes gaped back at me. I wiped my brow, grinned at the headmaster, and the next second was startled by a sudden outburst of the wildest applause.

Dr. Joad took me by the hand and seated me with the rest of the students. Within seconds the room darkened and the movie we saw probably turned out to be the dullest I had ever seen: "Laburnum Grove," a flick of the mid-1930s,staring Edmund Gwenn before his arrival in Hollywood.It was based on a J.B.Priestley play.

Throughout that film,my mind reverted over and over to my family in Berlin - - God,how I missed them and craved for the

touch of their hands,their love,the coolness of their cheeks!

But all I could do in those days,the weeks and months ahead of me,was to write my endless letters to them, always careful to hide my sadness from family member, each/ because I knew they had to bear a cross far heavier than mine in the slave state Hitler had created for enemies his/ that finally would destroy them.

Even more than sixty years later I still recall the tears burning in my eyes as I sat in the school's basement tuck shop, a hot chocolate and a jelly doughnut on my round marble table, writing for the umpteenth time to my mother and sister how much I missed them as well as to my father and schoolfriends. My tears kept rolling down my cheeks and landing on the paper,dissolving the ink into a Rorschach test of blots and rivulets of blues. Around me boys howled with laughter and bellowed out/ a dozen unintelligible words a second, paying - thank God! - not the slightest bit of attention to me.

'Rarely, though, did I mail these letters of despair and melancholy. I did not want my family and friends to know how unhappy I was. After all, they could not help me from afar,and, even more important,I knew that my parents,my sister and grandmother had it a thousand times worse, living in the Nazi hell of Germany. Why burden them on top of having to bear the cross of their fate with my own/ puny misery? I simply tore up those self-pitying tales of woe, of my heart-wrenching inner aches, and then went out into the 1939 summer sunshine and played a mean game of tennis or squash with one of my Bryanston school pals, cursing my fate.

PAINTING FENCES WITH A GREENHORN. (1939)

Students often remember their first vacation from school. I do not, at least not from way back in 1928 in Berlin. But I do recall my first holidays after entering Bryanston School in England in the spring of 1939 at the age of sixteen.

I spent it with a married couple not far from my live-in college in Blandford,Dorset: outside a village with the romantic name: Okeford Fitzpane. It was a childless couple - - all I remember after more than sixty years was the husband's initials - - E.A. - - and their family name: Pease, and I also recall distinctly his wife's ruby-red cheeks; both of them were in their mid-thirties. He was the manager of a nearby milk-and-cheese producing plant, a huge outfit in which milk from the surrounding dairy farms was pasteurized in gigantic gleaming tubs and thousands of enormous red-rimmed round cheddar cheeses lay on eight levels and endlessly long wooden shelves in ice-cold underground caverns.

Mr. and Mrs.Pease were devout Quakers and every morning they took me to a nearby Quaker meeting, where around a dozen worshippers sat quietly on wooden benches, meditated and offered their silent prayers to God. The assembly hall had no decoration, no crucifix,altar or even a pulpit. No singing. Worshipper simply rose from their kneeling position and quietly discoursed for about three or four minutes about any spiritual matter entering their mind, then sat down again or knelt on the highly polished wooden floor while the congregation waited for the next speaker to address the small assembly. . After an hour everybody left and met outside the prayer hall to discuss more earthly matters. That kind of service appealed to me: no fuss, no ritual. I was introduced in the open

after the service,
to fellow-worshippers, but generally speaking the two Peases kept largely to themselves in their immaculately clean, sparsely furnished one-story house. While there, I spent most of the Easter-break working in their garden, writing to my family in Berlin and applying a fresh coat of white paint to the picket fense surrounding their estate.

The Peases were not a family given to much conversation, but I liked them a lot: they were kind-hearted, decent, honest, industrious, quiet - - altogether a rather nondescript couple that would never in their lives be known to stir up waves anywhere; in fact, I never even heard them address the congregation in the morning at the Quaker prayer meetings.

A few days after my arrival there I was joined by another refugee youngster from Berlin, Lothal Markewicz. Oddly enough I
briefly
had met his mother and sister Ellen in Berlin late in 1938 when the Kindertramsport emigration process had first started.

Lothar was my age, sixteen, and had just arrived in England. Actually, the Pease residence became his first home in Great Britain and he was so happy and pleasantly surprised to see me as a German fellow-sufferer and refugee boy that he actually hugged me on first sight. He gave me a quick rundown of what had re-
cently
transpired to his and my family in Berlin, but he did not speak any English. However, since I had picked up a good smattering of the language in the three months since my arrival in England, I felt immensely proud to be able to serve as his interpreter with the Peases. Needless to say, that while we were painting fences and
worked in their garden,
we only spoke in our native tongue which proved to be as much of a relief to me as it was to Lothar.

Moreover, Lothar turned out to be quite shy, at least until he had gotten to know the person he felt like getting acquainted with.

Probably the reason for this noticeable timorousness could be traced to a most unfortunate facial aberration: he had been born with quite a protruding chin - - not unlike Jay Leno's - - which he attempted to reduce in size by nocturnally wearing a tight elastic bandage that had been joined to a nightcap. Whether this aid ever had an effect later in reducing the size of his chin I am not sure since we lost all touch with each other after I had paid him a visit a month or two later in the school he had been assigned to, the neighboring Sherborne Boys School, one of the oldest public schools in England. Years later, in the 1950s, I did meet his sister Ellen, who had become the receptionist of my first G.P. in this country, the brilliant Dr.Günther Elias, the doctor In December 1962, had the misfortune of suffering a heart attack while examining a patient. (He died the same night.) Today, I cannot remember whether Ellen ever told me what had happened to her brother Lothar.

Oddly enough, one other non-Aryan Berlin schoolfriend of mine, Werner Fuchs, also was rescued by the Kindertransport in 1939, but unfortunately I have no idea what had happened to him either after 1940. Nevertheless it would not surprise me a bit if Lothar and Werner, like the rest of us refugee boys, had also been interned by the British government after the fall of France in the summer of 1940 when we were seventeen years old. But my search for those two thirty years later has proven to be fruitless.

Now just take a look at this unheralded Quaker couple, the Peases, volunteering to take two total strangers, considered racially impure and to be exterminated by Hitler, into their home for Easter, and then compare their Christian selflessness with the taped observation of a world-famous Quaker, President Richard M. Nixon, when he was taped in his 1972 Oval Office saying to

Treasury Secretary John Connally: "Look at the Justice Department, it's full of Jews...The lawyers in government are damn Jews." (Only in March 2002 was this tape released to the public.) But never did anybody reveal the true love-thy-neighbor Quaker spirit of the Peases...until today.

MY FAVORITE "SLUM GAL." (1939)

A silly shortlived "romance" happened to me soon after war was declared by Neville Chamberlain on Nazi Germany in September 1939. (September 3) That day I was staying in Woking, Surrey, just outside London, on the palatial estate of Sir Eustace Pulbrook, who was financially and legally responsible for me as a foreign minor living in England and who also just happened to be the chairman of Lloyds of London. Naturally, that historical September 1939 event, when Prime Minister Chamberlain declared war on Hitler over the BBC at exactly 11:15 a.m., saddened me incredibly. In fact, it changed my entire life completely when I realized that I might never see my family again. It will come as no surprise that frequently I did suffer from severe bouts of depression that year.

And yet...soon after World War II had started (prior to that date just the Great War), nobody had ever spoken about World War I, something entirely unforeseen happened. It occurred during the unmilitaristic 1939 period called The Phoney War, because everything remained so peaceful in England, even though Hitler was winning in Poland. What happened was that Westminster decided to send London's and other English cities' youngsters under the age of sixteen to the safer countryside areas, and one of the half-dozen youngsters arriving "for the duration" at the Pulbrook estate turned out to be a mature and mightily attractive blond thirteen-year-old girl named Joyce Baker. Until that date she had lived all her life in the more impoverished part of the British Capital and on her arrival at the wealthy Pulbrooks immediately hated her unaccustomed luxurious "digs" to such an extent that she made three successful attempts to break free and secretly hitched her way back to her relatively poor family in London.

That family had just returned her to the Pulbrooks for the third time when I arrived at the estate again, this time for my

Christmas break from school on England's south coast in Dorset.

Joyce was tall and slender with a saucy, yet pretty face, and that sauciness converted her entire nature into a rebellious and defiant being. Sir Eustace and his kind-hearted, intellectual son Roger, who was ten years my senior and a history and English teacher at my Bryanston School in Dorset, encouraged me to keep Joyce away from the other juvenile London evacuees, who she was plainly, though unsuccessfully, trying to influence to join her on her next attempt to "flee the coop," and all I could do at that stage was to finally succeed in persuading her to play a game of squash with me in the rather remote squash building that lay even beyond the tennis courts on Sir Eustace's estate. Unfortunately, the indoor squash court was unheated, and although neither Joyce nor I were anything but accomplished squash players (while Roger Pulbrook at that time was known to be the seventh-best squash player in the world), we two youngsters kept warm by playing a truly wild game of it for close to two hours, probably to extinguish our emotional frustrations and upsets. So wild, in fact, that Joyce began to laugh for the first time since being evacuated from London and displayed a genuine appearance of joy in this sports activity.

But after two hours we did collapse, totally exhausted, on the floor in the balcony spectator section, where we had temporarily stored our overcoats and scarves.

Joyce admitted to me that this was indeed the first time she had laughed since war was declared. Both of us were drenched in perspiration and Joyce started to dry my neck and chest with her handkerchief, leaning over me. What possessed me at that stage I don't know, but suddenly I pulled her down and kissed her gently on her lips, my first romantic kiss in England. She pulled back and frowned down at me. I whispered I was sorry and would never do it again, and in return her frown deepened and she shook

her head, then lowered her face and simply brushed her lips over mine, saying how lonely she felt and how much she was missing her family.

What could I tell her in response but that I was totally cut off from mine and might never see it again if Hitler decided to kill them all. Joyce simply frowned, then kissed me, this time for a lingering kiss that suddenly tasted quite salty. She pulled back and tears were rolling down that "tough" girl's cheeks when she whispered I should tell her something about my own life in Nazi Germany, from which I had escaped that same year.

We just huddled there on the floor and emptied our hearts to each other and did, likewise,for the remainder of my vacation, always making it a point to meet after breakfast in the squash house, where we completely exhausted ourselves first by playing a rough game. We never advanced further with this romantic exercise, probably because instinct told us that in our situation and juvenile state a more sensual response would lead nowhere, and we proved to be right.

Aroused as I was by my sensing her warm,soft and willing body against mine, my stay at the Pulbrooks always turned out to be brief before my return to college again and only once in a while did Joyce and I stay in touch during the war, mostly by mail.

When she turned sixteen, she could legally go back to her mother in Roehampton in London and there she resumed taking her school finals. I visited her only once in that immaculately clean London home,where she lived with another sister, a brother and her sweet, middleaged mother,who did not feel the least bit disadvantaged by her clubfoot.

That lunch-meeting took place in 1946, by which time Joyce

had turned into a truly lovely young woman and proved to be the only G.I. bride I personally knew. She had married her American airman and become a Mrs. CcConnell. Her USAF husband had already returned to the U.S. early in 1946 and she was about to follow him to his home in Indianapolis. Until about 1950 we did correspond occasionally and she sent me photos of her two baby boys and of her sister and mother, who had followed her to the U.S., but then one day the correspondence fizzled out since we probably were too involved in our own lives, and my last letter to her years later was returned to me by the post office as "Addressee Unknown." Still, today that darling "cheeky" girl would also be well into her seventies, perhaps even a great-grandmother already.

When the title of this chapter mentions the word "slum," this is not meant to indicate that Joyce came from the slums of London - - something her mother would never have tolerated for her children - - but at the time of the urban children's evacuation to the English countryside, many of these governmentally appointed "foster homes", into which these children were placed, firmly but mistakenly believed them at first to be kids from the cities' slums only.

WAR AND LOVE NEAR COVENTRY. (1940)

The only time in my life I happened to come across a man and woman having sexual relations took place at the tender and impressionable age of seventeen, in the late summer of 1940. Even worse, not only did I know the male lover of this tryst, but I had always detested him.

In fact, that man had been first introduced to me already in the spring of 1939 as a teacher in my college (public school), which I had started attending a month or so after my arrival in England in early 1939. The teacher's name was Jenke and he served as a substitute/instructor at Bryanston, the school I was attending in Blandford, Dorset. As far as I could make out, he had no English university degree. Like me, he came from Germany, was blond, had a strong manly physique and was approximately thirty-five years old. At the same time he did not turn out to be a refugee from Nazi Germany in the sense that I was one. Rumor in the school had it that he hated the Hitler regime and simply wanted out, certainly a noble gesture, if this was the true cause of his defection. Consequently, he did not heed Hitler's call for all Germans abroad to return to the fatherland before the outbreak of World War II and/instead continued to teach at Bryanston. This impressed me greatly. But somehow Jenke took an immediate dislike of me, although he was not a teacher of mine and we had little contact at school; yet he did display a public animosity/toward me from the start, not even trying to be polite or speak to me when I tried to engage him in a harmless conversation about our native country or our past. Either he would not answer me or he told me pointblank not to interfere in his life, which, of course, I had no intention of doing. After a couple

of attempts of trying to get to know him a bit better, I shrugged off my endeavors of making friends with this man, who was at least twice my age, and consequently I never exchanged another word with him.

After the fall of France to the Nazis in June 1940, the British government declared the south-coast of England, where Bryanston was located, a Restricted Area, meaning that German, Austrian and Czech refugees from the continent, in case of an invasion, had to be evacuated, fearful that they might be Nazi collaborators; i.e. Fifth Columnists.

There were two other refugees like me at that public school, but I have no idea what happened to them, except that they also had to leave Bryanston. Nevertheless, with a heavy heart I packed my few belongings in my overnight suitcase from Berlin, leaving behind the light-blue school uniform (with its white monitor's ribbon) that I had worn for fifteen months, although I did abscond with my classy school-blazer that had its public school emblem stitched to its frontal vest pocket, and this magnificently tailored blazer graced my slender figure for another twenty years, even in the U.S.

But on the afternoon of my departure from Bryanston (which functions to this day as a renowned public school) I did cherish the fact that its headmaster, Dr. Joad, permitted me to become once more part of the annual (1940) school photo in front of Bryanston's majestic structure, which originally happened to be the huge private estate belonging to the Duke of Connaught, whose ancestors evidently came from Ireland. On his death he had left this estate to become an institution of higher learning.

I never got to see that 1940 school photo, but I distinctly recall the momentous occasion of being in it (as I also was in the 1939 Bryanston school picture), and for that matter I was also in the only other school photo taken of my classmates and me at my Berlin elementary Nachod Strasse school in 1929 with our

beloved teacher,Herr Hoffmann. The reason I do recall this 1940 Bryanston school picture so vividly is because minutes after it was taken,an automobile whisked me forever from its grandiose park setting, ~~since the college's location on the south coast of England had become a forbidden area for ex-Germans like me due to wartime regulations.~~ Yet I will always remember those wonderful,kind-hearted unsung teachers of mine: J.B. and G.V.Morris,Dr.Betaincourt, and especially my dear friend Roger Pulbrook, who,in 1948,became Administrator for Secondary Schools in Leicester, and, of course, the headmaster,Dr. Joad. Often I have wondered whether these yardlong school photos still hang somewhere at Bryanston more than sixty years later.

Naturally, once I was evacuated from this area in June 1940, shortly after I received my school certificate and had been appointed a supervising Monitor for my good behavior and a gradually acquired domineering attitude,I was picked up with a few other German and Austrian schoolboys my age (17) from nearby schools,like Sherborne, and despatched to a place near Evesham in England's Midlands, actually to a hostel that was being run by an elderly and kindly bachelor, Mr. Walesby and his sprightly assistant,Mr.Whitlow. In no time I made friends with my new young compatriots in that wondefful Victorian Worcestershire building. In fact, one of the few precious English photos of mine that survived the Blitz on London shows me in front of this old hostel in late November 1940 surrounded by my great wartime buddies: Rafael Buchbinder,Willi Reitsner,Walter Flandrak and Joachim Stein (later Joe Stone). It was taken shortly after my release from the Peel internment camp and just about the time of the first Nazi airraid on nearby Coventry in November 1940.

Mr.Eisenwagen,a heavy-set man in his early forties,became our carpentry instructor. A fully equipped workshop had been prepared for us boys,and within weeks I had learned to make dovetailed boxes,

ashtrays, tables and picture frames. Indeed, more than sixty years later, I still have the stand-up oak frame I made in 1941 (it stands) on my TV set and from it my beautiful sister Annemarie looks out at me whenever I'm home in my Jackson Heights studio apartment. But it was a truly happy time for us teenagers in spite of the dangerous war (time) situation when Hitler was about to invade England: we refugess were on friendly terms with each other, (to relieve our wartime tensions we) often went to the "flicks" together in nearby Evesham (where I saw "The Wizard of Oz" for the first time).

Once, in the gruesome winter of 1940-41 we did have a terrible snowball fight with neighborhood boys who taunted us as "Huns" and "Jewboys" until the snowball battle turned into an ugly fistfight, with all of us rolling in the deep snow, wrestling each other to the icy wet ground. I think it was the only time in my life that I lost my temper to such an extent that I threw all caution to the wind and ran, like a crazed dervish, into the midst of the "enemy camp", hitting,kicking.biting, screaming at the dozen or so native hooligans, not even feeling the blows they dealt me, until I noticed my German and Austrian friends joining me in the fray and, equally enraged, dealing blows and hurling snowballs and insults at them. And then, all of a sudden,the battle stopped. The two "enemy forces" withdrew,exhausted and licking their wounds, glad the battle was over; still, we were never bothered by the neighborhood kids again.

Mr. Walesby reprimanded us for our "Prussian behavior," then told us that hot cocoa was waiting for us in the dining-room,but that we should clean up first. As we passed him on the way to the bathroom, he patted each of us on our head ,

as though bestowing a victory-blessing on us.

Mr.Eisenwagen's wife, a small rather unattractive woman, endeared herself to us nevertheless by tending to our superficial wounds, and Mr.Eisenwagen's attractive mistress, the mother of one of us boys,hugged us for standing up to the local bullies.

By the same token, all of us youngsters enjoyed being pampered by Mr.Walesby's assistant, Pat/ Ray, a red-headed Quaker in her early twenties, whose loving embraces of us to her ample bosom after the fight seemed to be gratefully more of a romantic than Samaritan gesture.(She married a Czech refugee in 1948.)

In retrospect I feel that perhaps part of our tough and hardy fortitude in that fight could be sttributed to something I had initiated soon after my release from internment: I had applied for a Charles Atlas muscle-building correspondence course, which had been advertized in a British newspaper. I wrote to the New York headquarters of this sports empire, explaining my financial plight as a refugee and hoped that Mr. Atlas (if that was his real name) could get my fugitive friends and me the muscle-building course at a reduced rate since we depended only on governmental funds for survival. A few weeks later I received a letter from the man who actually signed himself as Charles Atlas in New York that he was enclosing the full course with instructions and step-by-step photographs of the various exercises at no cost to me because my letter as a refugee from Nazi Germany had moved him so much that he was happy to help us out in this matter. I was absolutely besides myself with joy and returned a letter of my warmest gratitude to New York, and after that all of us youngsters assembled every morning at six o'clock in the snowy backyard of the hostel and performed the Charles Atlas exercises barechested in the bittercold dark, measuring the circumference of our biceps after each dawn exercise. Perhaps this physical training had helped us to

toughen our bodies and to defeat the neighborhood bullies, but a week after those fateful fisticuffs and the snowball fight with us Jews and first- and second-generation Christians - (it puzzles me years later why so many of the Christian Right don't love so many of the other Christians) - virtually all of us youngsters came down with the most awful cold and flue symptoms so that the entire hostel was converted into a hospital zone of sniffling, coughing and aching teenagers whose merciful Florence Nightingale turned out to be our buxomy Pat.

It was just about that time that we could see from our blacked-out windows one November night that year the dreadful airraid on nearby Coventry, with that burning town turning the starless night into a bright crimson sky, reflected in the snow, until little else remained of Coventry than some black, smouldering ruins.

While most of my buddies shared dormitories, I was soon assigned my own room, a tiny, narrow chamber opposite the communal bathroom, where we had to take quick turns every morning in the same lukewarm bathwater, in order to save coal, which was rationed.

But one day, well after the snowball fight with our neighbors, I entered my bedroom before lunch to put on another sweater, and as I opened the door to my room I stared in shock and disbelief at my bed.

There, to put it mildly, slammed into my central point of vision the kind of pornographic scene that only a boy's fertile teenage imagination could dream up in its most lewd and wildest fantasy. Yes, on top of my bed lay a naked man and woman making love. Not that this unexpected scene of wantonness aroused me sexually. Far from it. It came so sudden, it was so unforeseen, that all I could do at that moment was to gape openmouthed at this totally thunderbolt-like living image, staring defiantly back at me.

The man shot up in bed, threw a pillow at me and yelled to get out. Shocked, I slammed the door shut, in a complete stupor, unable

to budge an inch in the dark hallway, not only because there happened to be a couple of people making love on my bed, but because the man who had thrown the pillow at me, turned out to be none other than my Bryanston School nemesis, Mr. Jenke, the Aryan teacher from Germany who had refused to acknowledge my presence in school eighteen months earlier.

That proved to be a double whammy: Sex by two strangers on my bed and the man I disliked so intensely now occupying my room. I rushed downstairs and, without knocking, barged furiously into Mr. Walesby's office, demanding to know what on earth was going on in my bedroom.

He explained calmly that Mr. Jenke had refused to return to Germany and been sent to this Nazi hostel to teach us in the same subject that he specialized in at Bryanston. Like me, he also had to leave the "protected area" of the south coast of England, being a German national, but there was no reason for me to get so excited.

I did not bring up the subject of sexual intercourse on my bed to the septuagenarian Mr. Walesby but pondered what my next step should be since all my earthly belongings were in the room now occupied by Jenke and his lady-friend. Mr. Walesby suggested that I should simply transfer them to the neighboring dormitory, where a new bed would be placed for me directly under the window looking out on the front of the hostel.

It was at that point that Mr. Jenke himself (fully dressed now) came storming into Mr. Walesby's office, demanding a full explanation why I would roar into his room without even the courtesy of first knocking. Mr. Walesby then gave him a full account of the facts, especially that this happened to have been my room and that I had not been informed it was no

longer mine.

However, Mr. Jenke's dislike of me got the better of him, and in a high dudgeon he screamed that he had no intention of remaining under the same roof with me; in fact, that I should be discharged immediately. It was explained to him that I was still a minor, being only 18 years old, a person who had broken no laws, but Mr. Jenke's sullenness, his resentment of and contempt for me (he probably thought that I had spilled the beans about his lovemaking in my room) prompted him to demand that Mr. Walesby had to choose between him and me staying at the hostel.

Obviously this did not turn out to be a difficult choice for Mr. Walesby since, as a minor and enemy alien, who had caused no harm to anybody, I was not even allowed legally to live on my own, which in turn prompted Mr. Jenke, now flustered and ill at ease, to suggest that in this case he and his wife would look for other accomodations. Mr. Walesby warned Mr. Jenke that he would need permission from the local police authorities to move since, as an enemy alien, he, too, could not simply pack up and leave.

Not surprisingly, it proved to be quite difficult for Mr. Jenke and the blond lady, who, indeed, turned out to be his new wife, to find a home and employment as a tutor in another part of the country, but in those four or five weeks that he still planned to stay at the youth hostel, his behavior gradually changed and he actually approached me the day we were decorating the Christmas tree (the "we" included one refugee girl, Renate, and several boys who were also Jewish (and Christian non-Aryans)) in the diningroom and he pulled me aside into the corner of the room, asking me in a tremulous whisper, what Mr. Walesby's reaction had been when I told him that he and his wife had had sexual relations that fateful day in my room. I explained to Mr. Jenke that I had never brought up that episode to Mr. Walesby or

any of the boys, because Mr. Walesby had been quite upset well before Mr. Jenke's arrival at the hostel when he learned that 16-year-old Renate had been found in bed with Werner - - another 16-year-old - - by Mr. Walesby's female Quaker assistant, Pat Ray, [illegible] and I wanted to avoid any further trouble by pouring oil on the fire and reporting to Mr. Walesby that I had found him (Mr. Jenke) and his wife making love in my room.

Mr. Jenke frowned and bit his lips. Suddenly he grabbed my right hand and pressed it, whispering "Thank you."

Not so surprising was the fact that the three daily meals that all of us consumed in the crowded diningroom at about half a dozen long tables were always followed by "house-duties" that consisted of everyone being assigned to a particular chore, like cooking, preparing vegetable, serving meals, cleaning our rooms and hallways, and washing the dishes. And as fate would have it, one week it was my turn to wash the dishes and Mr. Jenke to dry them. We did not exchange a word for a day or two and I was resolved to remain silent, not wishing to start a subject that might offend him or hurt his feelings and end up in an argument.

Around the third day Mr. Jenke suddenly broke the icy silence and asked me point-blank whether I knew why he had always disliked me, even as far back as early in 1939 when I first entered Bryanston School, where he had served as an assistant instructor at the time. I said I could not figure it out since I personally never had had any contact with him or given him any reason to be the butt of his contempt for me.

He then blurted out the truth that had caused all this friction between us. Evidently the sole Nazi sympathizer and Hitler admirer at the school, a big burly blond student named Lockhart, had

confided to Mr. Jenke that I was spreading the rumor in school that Jenke should be deported back to Nazi Germany since he allegedly had expressed to me his strong sympathy for Hitler's anti-Semitic policies and his great admiration for the Führer's conquest of Europe.

Naturally I was shocked by this mendacious statement.Never in my wildest dreams had I ever even brought up Mr. Jenke's name to Lockhart, who for the obvious reason of being a Nazi sympathizer I disliked intensely, and if there was any discussion between Lockhart and me it virtually always ended in a heated argument and on one occasion in a brawl when Lockhart had torn up a German letter of mine, which the best-known German radio pianist, Herbert Jäger, had sent to me in England after I had written to him how much I missed his playing on his ten-year radio program called "Allerlei von zwei bis drei" ("Sundry melodies from 2-3"). Mr. Jenke remembered the program,too, and all of a sudden we had our first conversation, not only about Jäger's artistry but many other things we remembered from our stay in Germany.

Suddenly he asked me if we could still be friends as long as he and his wife were staying at the hostel and I told him I was only too glad to be on amicable terms with him.

After that brief encounter we spent many an evening together with his wife in the warm kitchen and talked about our lives until Mr. Walesby admonished us to go to bed before lights-out at ten p.m.

One other occasion that left an indelible impression on me in the Evesham hostel was the day Winston Churchill addressed the British nation on the BBC with his immortal "Blood, toil, tears and sweat" speech.

The war news in June 1940 had become progressively disheartening

for the British people and, in particular, for us refugees.

It was one thing for England to be defeated in the war and its citizens ending up under Hitler's heels. But like the Dutch, French and Belgians now firmly in Hitler's camp, the English too would not necessarily be in danger of annihilation or incarceration if they toed the Nazi line or, at worst, remained passive and non-resistant. However, for us Jewish and non-Aryan fugitives from Nazi Germany and Austria, our capture at the hand of the Nazi army in Great Britain, should Hitler choose to invade and conquer the British Isles, was a totally different matter. It meant either immediate imprisonment or death. And this much-feared and probable prospect of Hitler winning the war at that time struck fear into our hearts. The SS Einsatzgruppen (extermination squads) were no soft-hearted humane military outfits; their main function was to arrest and liquidate all those Hitler saw as the enemy and the dregs of humanity: us refugees.

For the first time we youngsters realized what Fate would befall us if the German armed services succeeded in setting foot on British soil.

Those hot summer days of 1940 seemed to squeeze our young hearts with an iron clamp in Hitler's fist and put a noticeable damper on our youthful spirits as we vainly contemplated what we would do if the Nazis really managed to secure a foothold on the white cliffs of Dover. Anguish and fear suddenly dominated our young eager mood-swings: some of us youngsters planned on escaping into the nearby Midland forests and live there until the Huns had been defeated while the other boys and Renate seemed more optimistic and could not imagine Hitler ever occupying "this sceptered isle." Inwardly, though, all of us felt the cold hand of death already clasping our immature minds and slowly throttling all

hope out of our hearts, especially when we saw the newspapers and the weekly "Picture Post" magazine with all those thousands of Tommies stranded on the beaches near Dunkirk.

Although Jenke was not Jewish but an anti-Nazi German, he too feared being captured by the most likely invading German hordes, because as a deserter from the Fatherland, he too would face a firing squad.

Then came the day of his departure and we hugged each other and hoped that Mother Luck would deign to bestowe a smile on all of us. I never saw or heard from him or his wife again personally. Our Evesham hostel closed early in 1941 after we boys had returned from our internment in November 1940, and all of us moved to a larger accomodation, Tyn-y-Cae (Castle of the Fields), two miles outside of Brecon Beacon in the Brecon Mountains in South Wales. Here all of us teenagers were stung senseless by a billion bees roaming for miles abound the fifty-odd beehives, which were tended by a fat ex-Austrian beekeeper named Hecht, who didn't like us at all, a feeling we reciprocated by hating his honey.

Otherwise, at least, here in Brecknockshire we were safe and miles from any Nazi bombs, but in the early summer of 1941 we were startled by the news that Hitler had invaded his "pal's" country, Stalin's Soviet Union. Earlier that day, we had gone to Brecon and seen "Top Hat", with the result that I fell madly in love with Ginger Rogers. It was several months later that Mr. Walesby informed us youngsters that he had received a note from Mr. Jenke, informing him that his wife had given birth to a healthy son. They named him Paul.

IN THE SAME BOAT WITH A NAZI. (1940)

Male refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria living in Great Britain, who did not join the British Army, were considered "enemy aliens" during World War II and interned after the fall of France in the summer of 1940. Female "enemy aliens" were exempt from this governmental directive.

At that particular time I happened to live in a youth hostel with about twenty other refugee youngsters from Hitler's empire, and this hostel was located in England's Midlands, in Worcester-Warwickshire's shire, between Evesham and Coventry. In age, we youngsters ranged from about 12 to 19, with me being 17 years old at that most critical period both for us teenagers and for the British Isles. The British army had just been routed at Dunkirk and the newly founded Home Guards were no match for a German invasion if Hitler had decided on parachuting his soldiers on English soil. In fact, the Home Guard was issued guns but hardly any ammunition and it was probably (and thankfully) Hitler's greatest military mistake at that time in not attempting to invade Great Britain since he would have met less resistance there than in France a month earlier. Oddly enough, it was not only Churchill's place at the helm of London's government that kept up our spirits, but the weekly BBC chats by the British author J.B.Priestley as well as the radio comedy hour "ITMA" starring Tommy Handley, which to our amusement made withering fun of Hitler's fictitious Fifth Columnist spy Funf. But we also loved radio comedians Tommy Trinder and Arthur Askey.

Although we teenagers were aware that any invading enemy forces would make short shrift of us refugees, should they gain a foothold on British soil, our mood for the most part was high-spirited and jolly and we loved the ancient head of the hostel, Mr. Walesby, a truly wonderful Quaker, and our carpentry instructor, Herr Eisenwagen,

a refugee from Vienna. Even today, over sixty years later, I still own a stand-up oaken picture frame I had made in his workshop, with a photo of my sister Annemarie in it.

But things changed drastically for most of us when, one morning in early July 1940, a contingent of British Tommies arrived at the hostel and informed Mr. Walesby that they had received instructions from London to intern all German and Austrian males aged 16 or older. And since I was 17 years old, I was one of the "chosen" ones with a dozen other boys my age at the hostel to be interned. We could take a small suitcase along, packing only the barest essentials, and within thirty minutes we were carted off by the Tommies in a "lorry" to arrive a couple of hours later at some army barracks near Worcester. (In 1974, Worcestershire merged with the county of Herefordshire, which is known today as Hereford and Worcester.)

It must be mentioned at the outset that at no time we prisoners of the British government were ever maltreated or in any other way abused, verbally or physically.

We remained at the barracks for about three weeks but were not permitted to walk outside the barrack structure. This prison-like treatment, however, changed drastically when we were transported to our next internment facility, which did turn out to be not so much a camp as a racecourse that had been converted to serve as our next "home." In fact, it happened to be the racecourse in the county of Yorkshire, a gigantic airy stable which had been transferred into a sort of huge dormitory, and here at least we were permitted to roam the not inconsiderable racecourse itself during the day. Nevertheless we were completely cut off from the rest of the world, meaning without newspapers and radio, so that we never knew how the military situation was progressing in the rest of Europe, not even whether Hitler had meanwhile deci-

ded to invade the British Isles. This proved to be a very unnerving time for us, although the treatment and food offered us were always beyond reproach. Altogether a gentlemanly imprisonment with a doubtful ending.

Before I come to the main event of this chapter, let me just skip the third camp of my internment and proceede for a minute to the fourth and final camp of "imprisonment," which turned out to be a specially requisitioned area in the holiday resort of Peel on the Isle of Man, which is an island in the Irish Sea and a dependency of the British Crown, but oddly enough not part of the United Kingdom. It's about eighty miles by sea from Liverpool.

In Peel we were lucky enough to have as our British military captain none other than the brother of the then-Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden. Captain Eden was a man in his forties, but badly hunchbacked, a reason, most likely, why he had been selected to excute his military duty in the rather safe haven itself virtually hundreds of miles from any air attacks. Although the island was never attacked during World War II by Nazi bombers or fighters, we refugees had been unlucky enough to be subjected to an air attack by a Nazi Stuka (dive bomber) right over the Irish Sea, miles from land anywhere, hours after leaving Liverpool. To make matters worse for us, the ship's area, in which we had been given permission to take our walks up and down the deck, was completely barricaded by an overhead cage-like wire contraption so that none of us would be able to jump overboard and thus save himself in case the boat was sinking. We were literally trapped on this ship, come hell or high water; probably the authorities thought that once on high seas, it would occur to some of us to jump overboard and swim two hundred miles to Hitler's continent of concentration camps. But for once, God must have smiled upon us, because the pilot of the Stuka dropped his small bombs in such a manner that they missed our ship by a good ten or

twenty yards and sank harmlessly into the ocean. It was only after the pilot began machinegunning the boat that we bolted for the inside of the vessel; still, being in the cramped interior did not by any means alleviate our fear of drowning by the hundreds in this sealed-off floating prison, and there were plenty of young boys around me crying and praying to a God Who probably was working overtime trying to make up His mind who to save on the continent and who to give another chance of life on the Irish Sea. The minutes of being raked by gunfire dragged on and on, but our vessel cut indifferently through the calm summer sea as though we passengers turned out to be nothing more than a bunch of vacationing tourists on a luxury liner. And - lo and behold! - after an eternity of being the fiery target of that incompetent pilot, the Stuka finally must have run out of ammunition, and, not being a Japanese kamikaze fighter, the Luftwaffe airman at long last took off to report to his superiors that he had successfully strafed a bunch of touristss on their way to the Isle of Man.

After disembarking in Douglas, we did cross the island for about a dozen miles in several buses until arriving in Peel, where the British government had requisitioned most hotels for us refugees and we were safe and sound, even though behind barbed wire, in the comfortable confines of a pleasant vacation resort. Since these hotels, of course, were equipped with large kitchens, all of us had been instructed to perform certain chores to keep ourselves and the camp in good shape. Our assignments consisted of cleaning our rooms, picking up the food items every morning at six from the camp's distribution center, cooking, scrubbing the dishes and sidewalks, and reporting all illnesses immediately to the British soldiers guarding the camp. To be quite honest, it must be reported that my all-expenses-paid-holiday-by-the-British-government proved to be, at the age of 17, a most en-

joyable seaside vacation, devoid of all sorrow or grief, except for the ever-simmering worry about Hitler succeeding in conquering the British mainland, with us being in the unenviable position of ever managing to escape from this island. To put it mildly: we were sitting ducks! However, apart from this nightmarish prospect, we spent most of the time on the rather uncomfortable stony beach, and even the area in which we were permitted to frolic in the icy October water happened to be impeded by large pointed rocks jutting out of the water that, somehow, limited our youthful enjoyment and fun in the incredibly salty sea.

Even though most of us were released from captivity after about six weeks on the Isle of Man, some of the refugees actually pleaded with Captain Eden to stay in the camp until the end of the war, a request that, naturally, was turned down, and even I left this wartime paradise (that included tennis courts without tennis rackets) with a heavy heart in the first week of November 1940 to return with other refugee boys to my hostel near Evesham. In fact, a week or so before our departure from Peel, Captain Eden called Jews and non-Jews alike into his private office and presented each one of us with a pocket-edition of the Bible, a gift I have kept to this very day.

The return trip across the Irish Sea was particularly unpleasant, not because of another Luftwaffe raid on our ship, but because of the bitter-cold, drenching rain that kept us for the most part in our vomit-stinking cabins; even worse, when we ventured out onto the icy deck we were trembling and shivering with cold, having no clothing with us but the summer outfits that we had set out with almost five months earlier. The irony is that a few days after our arrival back in the youth hostel in Evesham, early in November 1940, we were woken one night by the bombs and flak a few miles away when the Nazis bombed Coventry for the first time. Within an hour, the entire night sky turned blood-red from the enormous

conflagration and even the distant thunder of the exploding bombs shook the hostel to such an extent that we could sense the tremor of each Coventry house going up in flames inside our bodies. Oddly enough, it was the following day that Mr. Walesby took a picture of some of us refugee boys in fromt of the hostel: Willi Reitsner, Walter Flandrak, Rafael Buchbinder, Joachim Stein and myself - - a picture I still possess, wondering whatever happend to these good friends of mine of more than sixty years ago.

Lastly,though, one event above all others does stand out among the occurences in those four internment camps. It happened actually in the camp before we reached the Isle of Man, a camp named Warth Mill near Liverpool, which had been,at one time,a Lancashire wool factory but at our arrival of that long-ago autumn must have been retired for a number of years already. Shattered windows abounded; huge cobwebby balls of dust rolled all over the drafty interior; mice and rats scurried around dark corners, and a make-shift kitchen was erected for our benefit, with each of us being handed a metal plate, metal cup, knife, fork and spoon,and then we were directed to the two stories, where our resting place was supposed to be: right on the filthy concrete floor - - no beds, no mattresses, no pillows, no blankets.We could choose on which floor we selected to live,if this could be considered living among the rodents that scurried away at our sight but returned during the pitch-black hours of the night, hoping for some morsel of food. Moreover, this out-of-commission factory was located next to a sluice, from which a trickle of filthy,smelling water dripped noisily and non-stop into a running body of water and,to top it, we had the pleasure of observing throughout our entire stay there for about 3 weeks the hind part of a drowned dog sticking out of that pool of malignant water. When it came to mealtime - twice a

day, at 7 in the mornings and twelve hours later for dinner, which for the most part consisted of herring and dry bread slices with tea - none of us went to sleep with a full stomach. Besides, I had the misfortune of being assigned a resting place next to two young gays, who tried to drown out the miserable environment with their own erotic activities, topping it off with a number of ecstatic, vocal outbursts at their sexual climax after night fell and it was difficult enough for me to fall asleep anyway on the stonehard, ice-cold concrete floor. Homosexuality as such does not upset me so long as it is performed in the privacy of a room, which of course also applies to the more common heterosexualty.

Much more annoying to me was the hour-long lining up for the morning meal, which for some reason consisted only of lukewarm tea and baked beans that kept many of us hundreds of young and old men sitting on two rows of about 50 enormous buckets confronting each other, and it truly is no joke for twenty-five men facing a row of twenty-five other men in the open air straining hard or not so hard in their effort to defecate. Even worse was the order of the English camp commandant that these buckets were out of bounds during the night and that we had no right to urinate or empty our bowels between the hours of nine at night and five in the morning. Those who ventured out during the night would run the danger of being shot by British sentries patrolling the grounds. Consequently, between dinner and the nine o'clock curfew, long lines of hopeful defecators queued up for the privilege of occupying a nocturnal bucket before retiring for the night on the concrete floor.

Nature, though, is no respector of manmade laws, whether of the Churchillian or Hitlerian kind. And the horrible irony was that not only we Jewish and non-Aryan refugees from Nazi Germany had

been incarcerated in this filthy factory, but - impossibly - also the crew of a German U-boat that had capsized near the British coast a week earlier. This crew of about twenty sailors in their Nazi marine outfits had been assigned their resting place on the ground floor of the factory not too far from the exit that led to the latrines outside. But their area had been cordoned off by the British authorities and, although fully visible, was held incommunicado from the hundreds of other captives like myself. Nevertheless, groups of Jewish prisoners could not resist the temptation to hurl invectives at the Nazi captives from a safe distance while the Nazis for their turn screamed obscenities with anti-Semitic overtones at the rest of us "jailbirds." The Tommies parading the floors during the daylight hours did not prevent these shenanigans from being carried out as long as they did not develop in physical outbursts of violence. Oddly enough, they never did, which, in retrospect, well before the worldwide disclosure at war's end that there was a Holocaust, is quite an amazing feat, because all of us have had to leave our homeland behind because of these very Nazis with whom we had to now share this uncommon prison camp.

Nevertheless, one night, after a couple of days of constipation, I simply had to move my bowels, come hell or high water, hard as I tried to suppress it. The two gays cursed me for disturbing their amorous encounter as I stepped in the dark over or on their bodies in order to find a way out of this abominable abdominal predicament. Carefully I sneaked past dozens of sleeping bodies and made my slow descent to the hellish ground floor where the U-boat crew and hundreds of Nazi refugees sawed the nocturnal darkness with their snores. Normally this distance could have been transversed by me in a matter of two minutes, but with nothing but sheer blackness in

front of my eyes, I could only advance by sheer instinct, blindly hoping and groping that I'd make it in time to one of those buckets. All I wished for was that at least none of the patrolling Tommies would become aware of my presence outside.

When I finally arrived at the exit leading to the outside, I found the opening blocked by another person - - one of the Nazi U-boat POWs. It was a clear starry night outside and a full moon shone upon our faces. I asked the marine in German whether he was in the doorway to catch a breath of fresh air, which really did not prove to be fresh at all, and he whispered to me that he had to obey the call of nature and use one of the lavatory buckets. In other words, the Nazi was "in the same boat" as I. We asked each other what we were supposed to do since there really was a British soldier visible in the distance patrolling the grounds up and down, with a rifle slung over his shoulder.

Suddenly we realized, we were neither Nazi nor Nazi victim, but simply two human beings whose bowels demanded immediate release. In fact, all of a sudden we learned that the common enemy was not our different ideologies, but a soldier of the country that had saved my life. In the moonlit doorway, we confided our fears to each other that we really might get shot at or even be killed, but after a few stomach-churning minutes nature decided for us to make a dash - however foolhardy - through the night for two of the waiting latrine buckets. Nature's call completed, we heard the voices of a couple of Tommies closeby and held our breath, but after the soldiers were out of earshot again and we could not even see the soldiers near the latrines, I grabbed the Nazi's hand and we made a desperate dash back across the dimly lit distance to the factory.

Out of breath and panting from exertion plus the fear of being detected by a British soldier ordered to shoot and kill, the German sailor tightened his grip around my hand and would not let go. In the moonlight I saw him grimly nodding at me as he uttered some words, the meaning of which I didn't comprehend at first: "Tut mir leid, was da drüben passiert!" ("Sorry for what is happening over there!")

Only the following day I understood what he meant to convey: He was referring to what the Nazis were doing to its Jewish and non-Aryan citizens in Germany.

The next morning, after a good night's rest, I watched the U-boat crew and the Jewish detainees shouting insults at each other again: only the blond sailor, who had braved the previous night with me, squatted on the concrete floor, his head buried in his hands.

In retrospect, I can say with a clear conscience that I never reproached the British government for interning us male "enemy aliens" temporarily (~~when were not interned~~), which stands in sharp contrast to the U.S. government sending 110,000 of its second-and third-generation Japanese-American citizens to internment camps for the duration of the war, although a Japanese-American regiment garnered more medals for bravery on the battlefield in WWII than any other U.S. military outfit. In contrast, every German and Austrian refugee, like the rest of the British population, had also been issued an identity card, a gasmask and a ration book containing coupons for food and other essentials, like clothing, and under the Control and Employment Order, every able inhabitant of the British Isles, not in the armed services, sooner or later had to work in war factories, on the land or in offices, furthering the war effort directly or indirectly, and "enemy aliens" were no exception and soon became a fixture on the English scene very much like the million G.I.s, who arrived there after 1941.

However, as far as German and Austrian immigrants and German-American citizens in the U.S. were concerned, the government in Washington, D.C. felt compelled to intern just over 10,000 of them during the war in Crystal City, Texas. They simply were considered to be a serious security risk by the American government - - an infinitesimal number really out of a total of 30-35 million German-Americans at the time.

During that period more than 400,000 German and Austrian Nazi POW's were also put behind barbed wire in the territorial United States, some of which remained in the U.S. after the war. Oddly enough, seven of the prisoners managed to escape and have never been located, while half a dozen other German POW's murdered one of their own because of his anti-Nazi sentiments and they were executed by the Americans after the war for this capital offense.

In contrast to them, how fortunate our group of refugees turned out to be. Except for our stay on the Isle of Man, our living conditions in those camps could not be expected to be, and weren't, ideal, but in retrospect the worst item, qualitatively and quantitatively, of our internment actually was the food. Or to quote Woody Allen on a slightly different later occasion: "What horrible food and such small portions of it."

MILDENHALL: A LOST AND SENSELESS YEAR (1942)

Around the end of 1941 my social case worker, Mr.Rupin, called me to London's Bloomsbury House, where he shared an office in the former West End hotel with dozens of other organizations, looking after German and Austrian refugees in Great Britain, and there he introduced me to a Mrs. Griffith, a dignified middleaged French lady who was married to a Welshman. Because of a rheumatic heart I had been suffering from since contracting diphteria at the early age of five in Berlin, I could not join the Alien Pioneer Corps, the military auxiliary for German and Austrian refugees that was affiliated to the British armed services, and on this occasion halfway through World War II I was instructed that I should do my wartime stint and work on the land somewhere outside London, namely in the tiny village of Mildenhall near Marlborough in Wiltshire. Not only would I help the war effort by producing food for the Griffith family and neighboring households of Mildenhall, but the fresh country air would hopefully help me get rid of the spot a doctor had detected on one of my lungs when I could not shake the persistent cough I had been inflicted with for a good quarter of a year.

A few days later I was met by Mrs.Griffith at the local railroad station with all my worldly possessions, which were crammed into the same small suitcase I had emigrated with from Nazi Germany to England two-and-a-half years earlier.

When I arrived at the Griffith country home, a spacious two-story villa named Durnsford House, I was shown to my quarters, an attic room with two straight walls and the slanting ceiling wall of the roof into which one tiny window was set. The room lacked electric light, and in order to read, write and attend to my daily basic necessities in the morning and at night, I had to light a kerosene lamp, which also served the dual purpose of heating the attic to a slight degree, an almost

hopeless case of warming myself in this Spartan quarter as far as that gruesome winter with its biting below-zero temperatures was concerned.

However, in summer I did not fare much better, because the sun shone directly on the red-shingled roof under which I housed and the temperature frequently rose into the eighties in my room.

Both Mr. and Mrs.Griffith were always extremely polite and fair to me but never exhibited any warmhearted displays of friendship. Mr.Griffith was a professional painter and gave afternoon lessons to a number of private students from closeby schools. The entire house was crammed full of his oil paintings, covering every inch of the walls, mostly of flowers, still lives, and fruit, and although I considered him a competent teacher, I respected but did not overly admire his own work, which appeared to me to be reasonably realistic but quite lifeless and dull. However, he was kind enough to give me lessons free of charge and six decades later I feel that he truly managed to instil in me not only an appreciation for the actual process of oil painting, as did another instructor in the 1950s in New York, but for the fine art of the great Masters.

The Griffiths also had a daughter, Rachel, who was my age, in the early twenties. She was not unattractive but I could never cotton on to her, because first of all she appeared to me to be rather flabby, though certainly not fat, but even more important she never seemed to have an occupation. Under normal circumstances that would not have mattered, but in wartime, and with England hard-pressed and struggling for survival while Hitler still won most major military battles, all men and women in Great Britain had to serve the war effort, either in the armed services, in war factories, offices, stores, or on the land. Rachel's main activity seemed to consist of nothing but entertaining the Free French Forces, whose members the French-born Mrs. Griffith always invited for weekends and which Rachel

serenaded with songs at the piano in their spacious livingroom. Both her singing and piano playing I thought left something to be desired and from the looks of the invited French soldiers and sailors they could have done well enough without that kind of amateurish but kind-hearted entertainment. However, late at night Rachel disappeared into the countryside during the warmer seasons with some of these Frenchmen. Whether for dancing, pub-crawling or other more erotic purposes I never found out.

I was too much concerned with my own welfare. Fortunately, the cough soon disappeared in the pristine fresh air of the countryside, but these icy winter months proved to be extremely cruel since I had to work outside in the biting cold for eight hours a day, a great deal of the time looking after the fields of artichoke beds in their sticky loamy soil.

When it snowed heavily or poured with rain or the weather was so biting cold that the soil could not be dug up I worked in the large barn next door where my main occupation consisted of sawing huge branches and tree trunks from a nearby forest into formidable small chunks for the stove in the Griffith kitchen and the fireplaces in their bedrooms and livingroom.

They had a fox terrier named Chunky, which kept barking all night long in the barn where he had his little doghouse, and I begged the Griffiths to keep him overnight during winter at least in the kitchen which exuded a comfortable warmth from the stove, but they did not want their pet in the house and one morning, during breakfast, Mr. Griffith proudly announced that Chunky had finally gotten used to the icy barn-temperature because he had not barked at all after the previous midnight. When I finally went into the barn to give Chunky his breakfast, which consisted of some hot milk with chunks of old crusts of bread, I found the poor animal dead outside his dog

house, stiff as a board,frozen to death. I brought the dish back into the kitchen and reported the sad news to the Griffiths.

Rachel burst into tears and Mrs. Griffith shouted at me that I should have been more diplomatic or gentle in imparting the death bulletin to the family. I asked her how I could have explained the tragic news of the dog's passing to the Griffiths more diplomatically. Should I have said that the dog's life was peacefully ebbing away and that another medical bulletin would be issued within the hour? This probably sarcastic,uncalled for response of mine ignited a monstrous explosion from both Mr.and Mrs. Griffith, who accused me of being a typical Hunnish German for making such a cynical remark at a time of mourning. I ventured that it was more humane to make such a cynical observation than for them not to have listened to me and thus save Chunky's life by letting him sleep during the wintery nights in the warm kitchen. But at least we still had Pico,their adorable black kitten.

Unfortunately, my relationship with the Griffiths, a decent, intellectual family, went downhill after that sad incident. I was miserable to work in their large garden or the drafty barn in all kinds of weather for nine hours a day and five hours on Saturdays, but I did have the good fortune to see Prime Minister Churchill a few times pass the Griffiths' large garden in a long motorcade of honking cars, probably when he decided to take a break from his premiership and enjoy the verdant quiet fields of Wiltshire. I always made it a point to run to the road and wave to him with my cap, and once indeed he became aware of my presence and waved back to me.(Three years later, I happened to be in the crowd of a million in front of Buckingham Palace cheering him and the Royal Family on VE-Day, and although I did see him again in a motorcade in the 1950s passing the stone lions at the New York Public Library on Fifth Avenue,with hundreds of thousands of Americans hailing him,

I did witness a sadder occasion when a month after VE-Day, I accidentally saw him from my window on London's Camden Road sit on top of the backpart of his car, feet firmly planted on the seat and his Homburg resting on top of his walking cane which he waved confidently in the air, but on this occasion there were no cheering crowds as his car slowly cruised past my boarding house and I appeared to be the only one cheering him on wildly from my open window, causing him to look in my direction and giving me the V-sign with the two fingers of his free hand and a victorious smile. I was not a British citizen and could not vote, but this time, surprisingly, the British public voted him out of office as the first elected peacetime PM, although he did retain his own seat as an MP.

Nevertheless, I felt completely cut off at the Griffiths from all humanity while working there a good twelve months. The saddest part is that they proved to be such decent,honest people, to whom I simply could not cotton on.

My only entertainment was the flea-bitten cinema in Marlborough to which I walked every Saturday afternoon a couple of miles after washing the pots and pans and dishes, my assignment after each meal, as well as setting up a large fire in the fireplace in the comfortable sitting room during the colder days. Usually I had to line up in the queue for a good hour or so to get a seat in that minuscule cinema, showing for the most part some wretched British flicks of the mid-1930s,starring Will Hay,George Formby, Margarete Lockwood or Edmund Gwenn - - none of the better British films that originated later in the war. But it was my only entertainment since the Griffiths did not have a radio,and TV did not exist yet. Freezing and with chilblains between my toes in winter (when I fell in love with "Jane Eyre" and other Bronté masterpieces) and then sizzling in my roof chamber in summer depressed me no end.

To alleviate my loneliness - - nobody in the village would talk to me as The Hun I was mostly known as - - I attempted to write short stories

but the quality of my literary output proved to be deplorable and and a shooting script, / my loneliness, the unending hours of the most strenuous outside work/in all kinds of weather, and on top of it being shunned and mocked/by the local villagers, depressed me to such an extent that I desperately looked for some kind of an outlet to ease my enforced solitude and despair.

And that outlet came in the form of a 17-year-old girl - - Edith - - (Eddie) - whom the Griffiths had/employed a few months after my arrival - in the spring of 1942 - to serve as their cook and dishwasher to lighten my workload. Eddie could not join the armed services because she appeared to suffer from pneumonia or a bad cough that simply would not go away. Both of us complained about the Griffiths to each other, behind their backs of course, and she invited me a few times to her nearby home, where she lived with her surprisingly old father, who must have been around eighty, and her much younger mother. Amazingly, all three of them were completely illiterate and my conversation with them centered for the most part around agricultural and gardening matters. Not even the war seemed to be of particular interest to them; they also lacked a radio;/life for them would change very little even if Hitler had conquered the British Isles.

Eddie was a pretty girl and I could easily have had an affair with her (which would have been the first in my life), but my fear of contracting her lung disease gave me good reason to abstain from even kissing her. At least we could talk and empty our hearts to one another, although her parents never allowed Eddie to even go to the movies with me, or with anybody, on Saturday afternoons.

In the evenings I always took her home after I had pumped the water for the Griffith household and she had washed the dinner dishes.

After several months, I became increasingly concerned over Eddie's deteriorating state of health, loss of weight and growing weakness. I tried to persuade her parents at least to let her see a

doctor, but they turned out to be devout Christian Scientists and steadfastly refused to take advantage of this medical avenue. One day, in the summer of 1942, Eddie did not show up for work, which now also had been increased, as far as her workload was concerned, to include vacuum cleaning all the rooms and washing the windows, and the following day we learned that she had already collapsed at home, where a visiting friend of her family had called an ambulance over the protestations of the parents and a week or two later we were informed that this darling young girl had passed away of TB in her sleep. I was glad I had never kissed her, but even today I can still sense her hot clammy hands in the coldest of winter days pressing mine more than sixty years ago when I took her home in the evenings.

I had nothing to look forward to in that remote village, and although sometimes I attended the Women's Institute evening dances in the village dance hall or the Garden Festivals, when neighbors sold jars of their own vegetable produce as well as apples, pears, cherries and strawberries, I simply could not cotton on to any of my neighbors, hard as I tried to, because they still kept considering me either a Hun or a Jewboy, so that in my despair I finally gave a month's notice to the Griffiths, which they accepted with good grace, causing me to believe that, most likely, they were relieved to see me go.

Even today, I still recall the bushels of potatoes and artichokes that I harvested there, the pears and apples I had to pick from high up in their orchard, and the carrots and bulby onions and greenish white-stemmed leeks that I dug out of the loamy soil and which caused me to eat healthier fresh vegetable than I had ever done in the past. Equally, I remember the bitter cold nights and the eye-smarting vapors of the portable kerosene lamps and stove in my attic, a stove that Mr. Griffith finally placed into my room; and in retrospect I recall with

fondness the off-key renditions of Rachel's songs at the piano as well as the tiny cinema in Marlborough with its long lines opposite the W.H.Smith drug and bookstore, and with sadness the bloodstained handkerchiefs of that poor tormented Eddie when she coughed her pitiful lungs out into them, even my futile attempts at writing short stories in the boiling attic late at night in summer, and the banging at my door every morning at 6:30, with Mr. Griffith announcing: "Time to make breakfast," and me, without fail, sleepily croaking back: "Thank you, Mr. Griffith," and then washing myself with the icecold water that Mr.Griffith had left outside my door in a tureen in which I cleansed my body and face morning after morning; only twice a week could I take a bath in their sole bathroom, although the summer gardenwork did tend to make me quite dirty and sweaty and I was forced to wash the upper part of my body in the late afternoons at the faucet in the yard that was mainly used to attach the gardenhose to it and which also turned out to be a spectacle that Mrs. Griffith did not fondly approve of.

Altogether, nothing truly melodramatic, but a time of sadness and failure for me, of utter loneliness, and of mourning the loss of a girl I hardly knew, yet who is still close to my heart. And the remembrance of a family which was decent and slightly aloof, but which I would never forget and wished I could have been closer to, the Griffiths. In total: a memory of a lost senseless year, I regret to say.

On top of it, also that same year, I received the very last handwritten communication from my darling mother through the Geneva Red Cross. It did not even show her return address in Berlin. What she wrote were mostly generalities, such as my sister and her being alright and that they were allowed (by the Nazis) to go shopping for an hour twice a week. But what upset me most of all in that letter

was her shaky,almost tremulous, handwriting (she was only in her fifties at the time), whereas it had always been steady, clear and most legible in the past.

I wept bitterly,reading those few sad lines,fearing that my reply (via the Red Cross) would never reach her, (it didn't, according to my sister) and then (cried again when I mysteriously lost my mother's letter a year later during my move to London.

As far as the Griffiths themselves were concerned,the only news relating to them that I learned from a Marlborough friend of mine shortly before my emigration to the U.S. in November 1947 was that Rachel had married a rather impoverished Welshman after the war.

Little did I realize,though,that during my safe and quiet nights in rural Mildenhall, my beloved family, like virtually all German Jews and non-Aryans, were just about then being transported in cattlecars to their death camps in Eastern Europe, a historical fact that was announced in December 1942 in the House of Commons and by the Vatican.

Although a mere 1,400 German Jews and non-Aryans, like my sister, survived the war underground in Berlin, in Warsaw meanwhile Jewish partisans fighting the Nazis were hated and barely tolerated even then in the ranks of their Polish Catholic compatriots and freedom fighters, according to eyewitness accounts in the August 2002 History Channel TV documentary "Hitler's Holocaust."

SEX, FAIRYTALES AND BLOODY MAYHEM. (1943)

During World War II one of the biggest book publishers in England happened to be a company named Hutchinson.

I was fortunate enough to land my third job there after arriving in London, with its offices at 10 Great Queen Street, and with a bit of luck they hired me as an editorial reader in its juvenile division, my assignment being to pass judgment on the literary value of submitted manuscripts, of which about a dozen of them arrived every day in the mail. (My first job ever is discussed at length in the chapter "Mildenhall: A Lost Senseless Year." And my second place of employment turned out to be on London's Regent Street as a measurer of bales of cloth at a clothing-fabric wholesaler, but that job did not last long since it bored me to tears, even though the owner of that establishment, an elderly immaculately dressed old Greek, was almost like a father to me, trying to teach me the ropes of his trade, and in a way it truly saddened me to leave this decent man who tried to entice me to stay with an offer of five shillings increase in my salary per week.)

At that time I had my "digs" at Primrose Hill Road near Regents Park in the dankest and darkest of attics, something that did not faze me overly at the age of twenty-one.

The Hutchinson office was headed by a Miss Thake, a statueque and very attractive woman whose overlong slips constantly peaked out from under her dress - women at that time virtually never wore slacks - and to my way of guessing Miss Thake must have been in her mid-thirties and was reputed (by the staff) to be the mistress of the powerful Mr.Hutchinson himself, a tall elegantly dressed silver-maned gentleman in his fifties, who did dignify the rest of Miss Thake's staff with a polite nod of his head but virtually never with more than a "'d evening."

And true enough, Mr. Hutchinson, whose publishing headquarter was situated at another London location near Kensington, visited Miss Thake almost every day in her private office. Miss Holland, who happened to be Miss Thake's private secretary, instructed the rest of the rather small Great Queen's Street staff, which also included the gentle, pregnant-looking (she wasn't) balleromane Miss Sulway and me, never to cast a glance in the direction of the glass-enclosed booth, serving as Miss Thake's private office, while Mr. Hutchinson was paying her a visit. Not even the elderly, extremely capable travelling salesman, Mr. Best, ever sneaked a look at Miss Thake's glass booth while Mr. W. Hutchinson called on her.

Although my own job was limited to passing judgment and making editorial suggestions on incoming juvenile manuscripts as well as filing correspondence and artwork of our fairytale authors, I will never forget the high-class colored originals of hares, rabbits, foxes, magicians, witches and angels that finally ended up as the most gorgeous color illustrions in the juvenile Hutchinson books.

Only on one occasion, an extremely sexy, saucy secretary in her midteens, Rita Edwards, disregarded this forbidden glance at the glass booth and it resulted to our extreme consternation in a high-pitched shriek from the teen, which for its turn caused the rest of the office staff to cast that long-forbidden glimpse at the glass booth. To our delight, we saw the silver-haired Mr. Hutchinson stand behind his seated love goddess, Miss Thake, and kiss her neck while his hands gently cupped her ample breasts. Unfortunately, the shriek of surprise alerted not only us but also the two lovers, who shot out of their amorous clinch, turning crimson and so shaken by the discovery of their amatory behavior, that Miss Thake bolted from her seat and immediately stormed out of her private quarters and fired the offending employee on the

spot. Being a self-possessed and rather cheeky Cockney, the attractive R'ta broke into a glacial smile and told Miss Thake that she had to tell her boyfriend this gentlemanly position of lovemaking when she got home; no hard feelings, thank you so much, Miss Thake. She picked up her purse and coat and bade all of us a rather indifferent farewell.

For me, there seemed to be little job advancement in this particular firm, pleasant and sociable as the atmosphere had turned out to be, and after half a year or so I quit to look for greener pastures.

Not far from where I lived, I did succeed in being employed at a carpentry factory named Betula, although my job there belonged more to the wartime than peacetime category: I had to dovetail and glue enormous wooden boxes, whose purpose it was to transport large bombs to waiting Blenheims and Flying Fortresses on British airfields, but the boss there, Bill Lewis, did not seem overly pleased by the lack of enthusiasm I showed for my work and oddly enough it turned out to be him who suggested I try my hand at a location where his brother held a responsible position, namely at the famous Lyon's Oxford Corner restaurant, House, in the center of London.

Unemployment for a foreigner during wartime in England was frowned upon and it certainly was my desire to keep working, no matter where, as long as I could make a living and help to contribute to the war effort as everybody else around me did, and when a job at Lyon's Oxford Corner House was offered to me I jumped at the chance, hoping to become a waiter there, but unfortunately I ended up for the first time in my life at the bottom of the ladder: as a dishwasher.

Starved as I was from years of rationed food, however, I did hurl myself, like the rest of the staff, on the expertly prepared

luxury dishes, which I relished since we were permitted to consume any amount of food and number of dishes that our stomachs could hold, although the actual job of scouring dirty pots and pans and customers' plates and cups proved a messy unappetizing affair that I did not relish to pursue for the rest of my life.

But worst of it turned out to be the kitchen's tyrannical chef, everybody's boss in that huge cooking arena, a Frenchman who regarded me as nothing better than a wartime Hun to be defeated or exploited at all cost.

After my previous short terms of employment, I did fear to make a return to the Labour Exchange for a more convenient or comfortable place of employment since the constant change of jobs was bound to eventually strike future employers as me being a worker not suitable to be trained in their own enterprises. Consequently I did my best to give the food establishment a square-chinned try in simply hoping to be able to ignore the French chef's constant insults, which became increasingly more offensive until one day while I was scraping some grease off the bottom of a skillet he deliberately brushed against me and called me a Nazi pig.

Still agonizing over the absence of my family in Berlin and Hamburg and their possible imprisonment in some Nazi concentration camp, it turned out to be this unsolicited malicious insult that finally tore the last shred of my patience. Seconds earlier I had finished cleaning a long butcher's knife and placed it on a drying board besides the sink. Seeing red, I dropped the skillet, snatched up the butcher's knife and swung around, clasping the still spapy handle in my right and screaming at him that if he called me a Nazi pig again I'd ram the knife down his filthy French throat.

The Menjou-mustachioed chef blanched, stepping back and staring at

the knife I was holding in my clenched fist.

Just as suddenly as the tide had turned in my favor, I suddenly felt several hands seizing me from behind and slamming my wrist on the rim of the kitchen sink, Crying out with pain, I dropped the knife on the floor and the chef leaped at me a fraction of a second later, slapping me five,six times so hard that blood spurted out of one of my nostrils, soiling my apron. An instant passed and he screamed at me that I was fired. My captors' hands immediately released me, with the result that I had to accept my fate once more as a yound lonely "Hun" looking for a job in wartime London, feeling hated and worthless. And pining for love - - the love of my family.

Yet there is one sad postscript to this chapter of my life: Hazel Thomas, a charming young co-worker of mine at Willima Hutchinson's publishing office, agreed to mend my socks during the war in exchange for my rationed "sweets" (candy and chocolate) coupons and we kept corresponding for a few more years even after my arrival in the United States. In the course of that exchange of transatlantic letters I learned from her that Mr. Hutchinson had finally gotten married but, amazingly, not to Miss Thake, and that several years later, in 1950, he had committed suicide, cause unknown.

That's how Hazel reported his death to me by mail. She also had meanwhile gotten married, to a member of the Swiss Embassy in London, and moved with him to Buckinghamshire. That's the last I ever heard of her.

THE BUTTERFLY THAT SAVED MY LIFE. (1943)

One day in late 1943, when I had already settled into a war-factory job in London, I entertained the idea that after a year's silence from Helmut Driels I would pay him a surprise visit in Birmingham. I knew Helmut from my internment camp on the Isle of Man in Peel, where both of us, as 17-year-olds, shared a room in a requisitioned hotel with Harry Zwilling in 1940 for close to two months and enjoyed the early fall while London was going through the first phase of the Nazi Blitz.

As an enemy alien, which even to this day I still consider a rather degrading title applying to all German and Austrian refugees from Hitler's continent who had been able to not join the British Army or one of its branches, the Pioneer Corps, I applied for and received a special travel permit from a governmental London office to take a December train up to Birmingham to see Helmut for a day or two.

Although it proved to be a pleasure to leave London (and my munition-related job at Betula for a short while in order to take a breather from the nocturnal Luftwaffe airraids, I learned from the BBC that Birmingham had also had its share of nighttime visits from Hitler's air force. At least getting out of London turned out to be a change of scenery, which I welcomed, and I left Euston railroad station at around 11 p.m. one night and was due to arrive at Birmingham's New Street Station the following morning at the crack of dawn.

While I was still waiting to board the train at Euston an airraid delayed its departure by about an hour or so and in an all-night station restaurant we heard the familiar BBC newscaster's voice of Bruce Belfrage (or was it Alvar Lidell?) (- they always announced their names before reading the news bulletins-) that Hitler's Luftwaffe that night, of all nights, had seen fit to bomb various railway lines throughout England. Normally, such locations would not be announced on the BBC, but since the German radio stations had

already correctly bragged about its nocturnal raid on Paddington station in London,, the BBC saw no reason not to confide to its own citizens the truth about the bomb damage the Nazis were inflicting upon England's other urban centers that night.

Finally,though,shortly past midnight, the train made its slow laborious exit from Euston station and I curled up into the corner of my cramped bitterly cold compartment to get a bit of shut-eye before arriving next morning in Birmingham. But even so, once we were traveling through the totally blacked out countryside,passing suburbs and then village after village,it was difficult to find much sleep in the darkened railway compartments, which were filled for the most part with army personnel, men and women, mostly Tommies, Yanks,the Free French and a dozen other nationalities in their military, naval and air force uniforms. I was used to the sight of these multi-national troops from the streets of war-battled London that I felt completely safe and at home in their midst.

It happened in the pitch-black pre-dawn hours when the train was already half-way to Birmingham that we heard the close-by drone of enemy planes and the not-so-distant explosion of bombs in the starless countryside. What made me particularly nervous was the unnerving slowness of the train, which must have given most of the passengers aboard the impression that the Nazi bombers were actually pinpointing us, almost like a sitting target.

But then, suddenly, the train really ground to a halt. At first my fellow passengers believed, judging by their conversation, that we must have stopped at one of the blacked-out stations, but as we tried to steel our eyes through the windows at the unilluminated outdoors, it became clear to us that we had stopped in the open countryside, not at a station. Passengers ventured a guess that possibly a red railroad traffic light prevented our night train from going forward on its ap-

pointed route,. but after a period of about a quarter of an hour, many members of the armed service personnel became restless, demanding to know from the railroad official who had examined our tickets what was causing the delay. He did not know either.

Another ten minutes passed and finally a few of the passengers ventured to alight from the train, intent on hearing the news directly from the locomotive engineer. Again the rest of the passengers waited patiently for an explanation to this puzzle for an additional ten or fifteen minutes, but at long last most of the passengers, including myself, jumped from the open exit doors onto the almost pitch-black gravelly ground outside and advanced slowly and cautiously in the direction of the train's engine.

Very few words were being exchanged as we made our hesitant progress to the front of the train.. There, some of the passengers were already huddling in the wintery night and pointing wordlessly ahead when asked by us late-comers why the train wasn't moving.

To my horror and utter surprise I saw in the lcomotive's front lights something like the shadow of a giant man waving his arms in a cape as if he were still trying his damndest to halt the train. But even though the train had already stopped for half an hour, the caped man continued to wave his arms fra^n^tically. To me he looked like Dracula, but no sound emanated from him. All we heard was the moan of the wind in some of the ghostly trees nearby and the occasional hissing steam escaping the locomotive's pipes.

However, there we stood in the frosty night, miles from anywhere, and although we could not see the actual caped person's features in front of us, the locomotive engineer now blew the train's whistle two,three,four times. Like a zombie,the hooded oversize figure kept waving its robe, like a magician about to remove a thousand oversize objects from its secret pockets. People started

yelling at him to move, but to no avail. He remained rooted to the railroad tracks.

One of the soldiers finally aimed his rifle at the mysterious figure, shouting that he would shoot if this person persisted in continuing to be an obstacle to the train and its passengers. Again to no avail. The dreadful apparition kept waving its arms as though indifferent to the threats of the soldier. It was then that the soldier again raised the barrel of his rifle #4 Mark I and gave two warning shots in the air. The result: no reaction at all. The draped apparition continued to wave its robe undisturbed, giving no indication that he cared about or had even heard the warning shots; he simply would not budge.

At that juncture the soldier finally aimed his rifle at the target again and fired a full round of fatal shots.

The trajectories struck something hard...and ricochetted. But that was all. The mysterious figure kept waving its cape as though nothing had happened.

People began to get slightly alarmed now. Some grumbled that it must be one of Hitler's latest secret weapons; others considered it to be a holy spirit, a messenger from God. At the same time, there were a handful of foolhardy - - or extremely brave - - passengers who suggested to the soldier to stop shooting so they could examine for themselves what this ghostly appearance meant to communicate to us. Gingerly they advanced into the night, guided only by the beam of the partly blacked out locomotive front lights, and although I began to experience my adrenaline rush of fear coursing down my legs, my curiosity got the better of me and I traipsed through the darkness alongside the advancing foolhardy people toward the indestructible stranger.

As our group approached the mysterious figure I heard one or

two of the leaders of our group emit a sharp,scary scream that sent shivers down my spine and made me feel weak in the legs. I stopped in my tracks, as did most of the others, and we stretched our arms out through the darkness to ward off the giant hooded being.

There was nothing - - absolutely nothing that one could feel or touch. Slowly,hesitantly, we continued to advance, my heart going like a sledgehammer inside my chest. We talked in whispers only, not to lose anybody in our group/in the dark and to instil a modicum of courage into our scared psyche.

But suddenly one of the men in front of me tripped over something. A flashlight somebody had wisely taken along identified the object on the rails as a large/cemented mass or two of bricks. We climbed over them and advanced slowly, gingerly,visibly scared, when we stopped. Or had to stop. Because in the feeble beam of the flashlight and locomotive beam, we just managed to identify the ruins of a railroad overpass that lay, totally destroyed, in colossal chunks of brick and mortar, across the entire width of the very rails we would have had to travel if the train had not stopped. The Nazi bombers we had heard earlier in the evening must have destroyed this bridge when we had heard the defeaning explosion only a short time before. We stared wordlessly and bewildered at this scene of utter desolation and destruction, not uttering a word.

For a flash of a second my mind reeled back to an overseas CBS broadcast in the fall of 1940 when Edward R.Murrow so graphically reported to his American and British listeners what he was witnessing when Luftwaffe bombers/had blitzed and destroyed much of London and nothing but smoking ruins rose ghostlike in the urban conflagration/amid the distant rumble of departing Nazi bombers.

But on this particular night, all that our ears could detect were the distant/steamy hiss of the locomotive and/the howling of the wind

in the bare tree branches nearby.

In the dark, our eyes gradually began to pick up closeby objects as we tiptoed and traipsed around the scene of wreck and ruin, and I sent up a silent prayer to God that we had been spared almost certain death or grave injury if we had not been stopped by the man in the cape. In fact, right then one of the train's passengers called out to that apparition in the night and asked that person to identify himself, but all the mysteryman did was to wave his cape silently,as before,in front of us, right on the ruin of the overpass.

We could not imagine who it was that had saved the lives of probably two hundred people on the train, but there we stood in the night,sending up a silent prayer of gratitude to God for having dispatched the mysteryman to save our lives.

Somebody suggested that the train's engineer or conductor send out a warning to other trains and stations, so that these scheduled trains would not approach this point in the next few hours until the wreckage had been cleared up. And at long last, relieved and shivering, we returned to the train, still wondering to our fellow passengers who the person was that had saved our lives.

All of a sudden, and well before reaching our own compartments, one of the passengers uttered an ear-piercing scream. In the semi-dark, we could see him point to the locomotive headlights. We rushed forward to the front of the train once more,and there it was: Pressed against the thick lenses of one of those locomotive front lights rested a large butterfly - - either that or a giant moth, and its wings were spread and moving delicately.

"Good God!" the engine driver exclaimed. "It's a butterfly. Just a blooming butterfly!"

He was right. It was that butterfly, attracted by the light of

the locomotive, that had been casting a black shadow on the railroad tracks and then onto the pile of rubble ahead. The secret had been solved. The waving of the apparition's arms actually were the wing movements of the delicate insect!

Everything fell into place now: a harmless little butterfly had saved our lives. The overpass had, just minutes earlier, been destroyed by some Nazi blockbuster-bomb and here we were stranded, miles from civilization, in the most bewitching hour of a wintery night thanking God (and our butterfly) for saving our lives.

The conductor sent out his warning to other trains not to use this rail line, and about two hours later several buses arrived and picked us up, serving tea and crumpets on board, until we arrived, tired and disheveled, later that morning in Birmingham.

If the journey to this destination was unforgettable, the reason for my trip now proved to be minimally interesting. Once in Birmingham, I discovered that Helmut Driels had departed from his old lodgings and left no forwarding address as far as I could discover. I called on the local police station, but they would not reveal his new address to me and suggested that I write to him and the post office would forward my letter to his latest home address.

I took the train back to London without any difficulty this time and wrote Helmut a letter, telling him of my adventure during the trip to Birmingham, but about sixty years later I have not received an answer from him. That butterfly, though, proved to be one of the best friends I ever had...as did the anonymous locomotive engineer of the train, who had stopped our train just in time.

Only one more question remains unanswered: What was a butterfly doing alive so late in the year out in the bitterly cold open in the English Midlands?

CLEAN WINDOWS IN THE BLITZ. (1943)

A strange episode that I witnessed for only an hour or so took place at the London youth hostel I stayed at in 1943 on Primrose Hill Road, my very first independent lodging in the British capital. As in Wiltshire, I had a small room right under the roof and frequently bumped my head on the slanting incline of that roof above my bed when waking up with a start at seven in the morning to begin my job an hour later at Betula, the nearby woodwork war-factory not far from my Chalk Farm underground station. When I came home from work around six p.m., the young lodgers -- all of which, like me, were refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria my age, around 20 - - and I lined up for supper at Mrs. Dudley's, our overweight, kindly Dickensian landlady, who ladled out our meals with her smallish London cabbie husband in their tiny kitchen, which she operated in a no-nonsense manner.

One evening while listening to the BBC Home Service News, one of the roughly two dozen refugee youngsters - Fritz Schapps - was oddly absent from the lodgers' queue outside the minuscule kitchen, where we usually waited our turn and were handed, as in Dickens's "Oliver Twist", our portions of the customary meat pie and the unrationed custard pies; in fact, our breakfasts of kippers and many other unrationed fish had much more of an appeal to our uncomplaining youthful taste buds.

Schapps was the oldest lodger with the Dudleys, probably around 23 years old already, a highly intelligent young man with a rather skull-like bony face, a markedly protruding chin, and his grey eyes lying deeply embedded in their shadowy sockets. However, when we came home that evening from our factory jobs, we did not see Schapps lining up with us as usual outside the kitchen but only became aware of him when we entered the large diningroom with our steaming-hot dishes.

Even though it was getting quite dark already and supper actually had been postponed for almost an hour because of a fire on the adjacent King Henry's Road, we became aware of Schapps not eating a thing that evening but standing by the large diningroom windows, looking out on a garden through the man-size glass portals, cleaning the glass with a big sponge and a bucket of water by his side. Usually this job, like all other menial housecleaning chores, was performed by Mrs. Dudley's staff of two frumpy elderly charladies and one terribly overweight young maid.

My buddies asked Schapps why he was washing the windows since this was the help's job and, on top of it, why at that late hour. To our further amazement, Schapps did not answer us and kept on cleaning the same windows over and over, although it had meanwhile grown pich-black outside and Mrs. Dudley insisted that he should cease this activity immediately since this was not his job and, even more important, she had to draw the curtains because of the blackout wartime regulations, which demanded that no light in the British Isles be detected outside at night that might possibly attract the Nazi Luftwaffe when it paid its nocturnal bombing visits to London and other English cities.

All these warnings, however, to no effect!

Schapps plainly pretended not to hear Mrs. Dudley's warning, and finally some of us refugee boys and I "took the law into our own hands," trying to literally pry Schapps away from the windows and draw the blackout drapes. At that juncture the scene changed drastically, really turning ugly. Schapps became violent and started attacking us with the water-filled bucket, aiming its contents at us, with the result that we were being soaked from head to toe as was, indeed, the carpet in the diningroom. When half a dozen of us finally attempted to restrain Schapps and pull him from the windows so the blackout

curtains could be pinned together with the usual safety pins, he started raving and screaming at us and became so uncontrollably wild that the Dudleys finally had to call the police and informed them of the nature of the emergency.

Minutes later, a police van as well as an ambulance arrived and it took these professionals a good twenty minutes to subdue Schapps and force him into a straitjacket.

When we made enquiries a day or two later what was going to happen to Schapps, Mrs. Dudley would only tell us that he was still under observation in a mental clinic.

After a week or two, we talked less and less about him and his fate. War news and our own fate replaced the odd Schapps incident; life simply went on from one crisis to another, wartime or in peace, and it was only a month or so before I left England for the United States in Demcember 1947 that I paid my farewell visit to the Dudleys since I had moved to other "digs" in the meantime,and it was during that good-bye visit that I learned the sad news about Schapps: he had never improved in the asylum and,even worse, that one day the staff had found him dead.

Evidently, he had shattered one of the windows on the asylum grounds with the bucket he still carried around everywhere with him/and then cut his wrist with a shard,bleeding to death in the hospital's greenhouse, where he had always looked after the cucumbers.

A TEARFUL ENCOUNTER WITH SCOTLAND YARD. (1943)

It took place in wartime London at King Henry's Road 51 some time in the winter of 1943 when I was twenty-one years old. In retrospect it seems like writing about another person since it happened to be the only time in my life I had a brush with the law because I really was guilty.

My heavy-set but delightful landlady, Mrs.Dudley, had decided to transfer me from my attic room to a much more pleasant accomodation from Primrose Hill Road to the nearby King Henry's Road address, where I shared a large sunny room with two other refugees my age from Nazi Germany (and Austria, John Prager and Walter Flandrak; like me, both of them also worked in factories nearby, but none of us made much of a salary.

Moreover, the windows in our room did not shut properly, letting in a constant biting draft. The ceiling of our top-floor was damp from the rain and the snow that had melted (on the roof) when it was sunny, but every night we came home from our respective jobs we had to turn on the gas heater, not only to achieve a semblance of warmth in the room, but even more important we had to strip the bottom and top sheets of our beds since the linen had assumed a bone-chilling icy dampness from the inclement non-stop winter climate blowing through the cracks in the bomb-damaged windows. On top of it, the gas burned only for about sixty minutes for each sixpence we inserted in the meter's slot. But since we three youngsters made very little money and tried to save a few "bob" (shillings), we shivered through most of the nights until one fateful weekend we noticed by accident that we could turn a little wheel on the side of the gas-meter and have the gas burn for us twenty-four hours a day without having to insert a single penny of our hard-earned money.

All these shenanigans went without a hitch for about two months when one night on coming home from work and having had our dinner at the Primrose Hill Road section of Mrs. Dudley's "empire," the kindly landlady called us three roommates into her own private diningroom and asked us why our room happened to be so much warmer than those of the other boys in the hostel and why there were virtually no coins in our gasmeter box.

We played dumb and said that - sorry! - but whenever we put a sixpence or two in the meter the gas kept on burning for days. After that brief encounter we congratulated ourselves on how smart we had been and gotten away with it all.

The next day, however, things changed drastically. Even though the three of us had agreed never to divulge to anyone to finagling the timy wheel on the gas meter, we were told after dinner to remain in the diningroom, which we did. Shortly, Mrs. Dudley called one of my two roommates into her private diningroom and we thought that she would simply ask him again why we would get an inordinate amount of gas-heat without paying more than two or three sixpence per week. We would simply deny our little trick with the wheel and blame it all on the gas company.

This time, though, we had to wait for over an hour before my other roommate was called in for questioning. Again I had to wait a full hour and simply could not imagine what Mrs. Dudley could possibly ask my roommates that took so long, and it was around ten p.m. when it was finally my turn to be ushered into her private diningroom.

To my surprise, the two other roommates must have departed without my knowledge through Mrs. Dudley's private exit and I was confronted instead by two middle-aged neatly dressed men getting up and shaking my hand. They introduced themselves as being inspectors

from Scotland Yards and that they wanted to talk to me about our gasmeter. The two magic words "Scotland Yard" weakened my legs immediately and I asked them whether I could sit down. Sure, they said, and whether I'd like a cup o' tea. Yes please, I mumbled, and they questioned me immediately about my job,about my boss, how much salary I made, about my past, where I had lived in Berlin, where my family was - - anything except about the gasmeter affair.

But suddenly the gas went out in Mrs. Dudley's room and one of the detectives asked me if I had a sixpense to put in the meter since they only had pound notes on them. I said I did and inserted the coin into the slot. Immediately the flame shot up in the meter and we could continue to enjoy our chat in comfort. They talked to me about movies; their respective favorites happened to be Greer Garson and Betty Grable while Mrs.Dudley admitted she had not seen a "flick" since Rudolf Valentino died when she was a teenager. Next we discussed their favorite BBC radio program "Hi,Gang" with Bebe Daniels, Ben Lyon and Vic Oliver; Mrs. Dudley continued to pour more of her best Darjeeling tea into the sort of delicate china that young lodgers were never served with, and then suddenly after chatting for another half hour the gas went out again and they asked me for another sixpence,which I dropped into the slot.

One of the Scotland Yard men gave me an ingratiating smile and thanked me for my generosity, asking me: "Isn't it strange, Paul, that you put two sixpence in the slot in well under an hour, and in your own room you had inserted only three sixpence in the meter for a whole month?"

I felt myself going hot under the collar but put on an inno-

cent but rather flustered face, admitting that it was indeed strange, that perhaps something was wrong with the gas mater in my room.

And then one of the detectives showed me a statement from the gas company that listed my room's daily gas-meter readings. Evidently that reading displayed a lower end-of-the-month amount of gas consumed by us three youngsters than at the beginning of the month. Which meant, I realized with a dreadful shock all of a sudden, that we had turned back the little gas-meter wheel at the end of the month to such an extent that it actually registered less gas having been consumed by us than it showed at the beginning of the month, which of course would have been scientifically impossible, even if we had not used any gas at all in those icy winter days.

How was that possible when we had inserted a few coins anyway, the Scotland Yard men wanted to know.

I was on shaky ground and simply said I didn't know and had never touched the wheel. And they asked again: In that case, how come my fingerprints and those of my two roommates actually were on the wheel?

Feeling I was cornered, like the rat I was, I began to crumble and mumbled some silly excuse, but they kept pressing me, losing their friendly smiles, peppering me with more and more questions and telling me I could land in jail if they testified in court that my fingerprints were on the wheel. After an hour's cross-examination I realized the gig was up but was scared to admit to the detectives that my roommates and I were guilty. I started to tremble uncontrollably, and when one of the "dicks" said that I'd be the only fall-guy because my two roommates had already confessed that we three were all in on it, I broke

down. Tears of betrayal and of having been cornered not only by the Scotland Yard men but my own stupidity, my own shame of having committed a crime and letting my parents down as a common criminal, totally devastated me and I asked the two men how long I'd have to serve in prison.

One of the detectives gave me one of those deep,meaningful looks and explained that I'd be out again in maybe four or five years. Tears immediately streamed down my face on realizing that this time the gig really was up and I'd be a jailbird for fifteen hundred days and nights.

Mrs. Dudley rose from her chair, waddled over to me,kissed my forehead and said she'd heat up some more tea for all of us, but that in the future we should insert sixpence or shillings in the meter. I was free to go to my room, she added.

The Scotland Yard detectives asked me to please not waste their time in the future with such stupidity, which could land us in jail,since they were much too busy chasing murderers.

One of the men offered me a Woodbine (cigarette), the other one padded the top of my head paternally, we had some hot tea, a little bit of custard pie, and I almost felt like embracing the two plainclothesmen before they left. But I did hug a smiling Mrs. Dudley, whispering into her ear I'd never break the law again. I never did.

A FRIEND IN LONDON AND BOSTON. (1944)

Personally I thank God every day to have survived World War II and to be able to bear witness of Nazi atrocities and post-World War II hate propaganda. But my life focussed not only on the venom propagated by the dark 20th-century souls surrounding my youth but also on the friendly spirits that I was privileged to spend my younger days with.

For instance, one of the true friends at my "diggings" at 302 Camden Road in London after 1942 was the kindhearted landlady and cook Mrs.Carrot, whose beautiful daughter Joan frequently worked in the chorus line at the London Palladium. Never will I forget the latter's wedding day in 1946 when her new husband, a sailor of the Royal Navy, disappeared right after the church service and did not show up for the next two days, bragging on his return how many girls he had managed to lay since this holy matrimonial service. Even when I finally departed England for the United States in November 1947 (via Sweden),Joan had not seen her husband,who was on leave,for a number of days.

And then there was my best friend, who had also rented a room at Mrs.Carrot's, Max Caspari, a highly intelligent young refugee from Nazi Germany, a year my senior, with whom I could discuss any subject under the sun, from politics to science and sex to movies. He was a brilliant mathemetician and student of physics,and every night during the Blitz of the Nazi V1 and V2 attacks on London he would roll up my mattress on the top floor and carry is downstairs to his large room on the safer ground floor,where we would sleep through hopefully undisturbed wartime nights,and in the mornings all the lodgers consumed their rationed breakfast of toast and porridge in the airy diningroom,

and finally Max and I'd rush together out of the house to catch a bus into the city to our respective places of employment. At night, when we did not attend to our own business or studies, we made a point of listening to the magnificent BBC dramas and on Saturday nights we'd visit Leicester Square to see some Hollywood movies or J.Arthud Rank productions from Denham Studios or Michael Balcon pictures from Ealing Studios outside London. Each of these films we'd tear to pieces for hours afterwards; in particular we'd get some sadistic pleasure from finding fault with Cecil B.DeMille potboilers, which to our mind at least were so poorly directed (except for his "Greatest Show on Earth" with Jimmy Stewart) and amateurishly acted as to cause us to burst out with howls of laughter at its most tragic sequences; especially his "Story of Dr.Wassell," which dealt with a U.S. medical doctor's brave war effort to save his patients under enemy fire, certainly a noble theme, but so Hollywoodishly produced with typical studio backdrops that Max and I could always anticipate the next scene and soppy dialogue. We also confided our amorous conquests to one another and fate would have it that both of us actually emigrated to the United States at about the same time in 1947.

Unfortunately we met only twice more in this country. On one occasion, on a weekend in 1949, I visited him in Boston, where he was studying math and science at the neighboring MIT in Cambridge, and we took that opportunity to attend the striptease joint "The Old Howard" in Boston. The second time we met, I was a guest at his Ft.Lee, New Jersey wedding a couple of years later to a lovely and brilliantly talented girl named Sarah, who had one wooden leg I was told. However, I could never distinguish from looking at them which one was the artificial leg.

We exchanged letters a few more times after they had moved to

Commonwealth Avenue in Boston, but then gradually our correspondence dropped off. When I tried to resuscitate it half a dozen years later, my letter to him was returned to me a couple of weeks later with the notation by the Boston post office that the time for forwarding mail to the addressee had expired and I never found out what happened to Max and his wife Sarah.

D-DAY WITHOUT THE SHOOTING. (1944)

Almost exactly half-a-year before I was injured on December 14, 1944 in my left leg by the shrapnell of a Nazi V-1 bomb (nicknamed "Doodlebug" in England) near High Holborn in London, I had one of the most unpleasant experiences of my life.

As fate would have it, that disagreeable event took place in the early evening of June 6, 1944, D-Day, the day the Allied forces under General Eisenhower invaded the European continent. I had gone to see a movie called "Bataan" near Camden Town, where I lived (at the time I was employed as a social worker in London's Bloomsbury House, helping German and Austrian refugees land jobs) and as I emerged from the cinema around seven p.m., still in broad daylight, I took notes about the "flick" I had seen, as was my habit, having studied movie-making under Leslie Howard until shortly before his death in 1943. Perhaps I should add that my entire youth centered around the movies: Throughout the 1920s and early 1930s my father had been appointed as the medical doctor-in-residence at Berlin's Ufa film studios (in Babelsberg), and here I played parts as an extra (as, for instance, in "Emil and the Detectives", scripted by Billy Wilder, a patient of my father, and based on Germany's best-known juvenile novel by Erich Kästner); it was also at the studio that I was filmed with Hitler in 1933 shortly before my father was dismissed by Dr. Goebbels. (Most of my family later perished in the Holocaust.)

However, on the occasion in 1944 I jotted down my movie notes in a tiny pocket-book diary that I had recently

found in the pocket of a jacket I had not worn in years; in fact, it happened to be a diary from the 1930s that somebody had given to me years earlier in Berlin as a birthday gift.

"Bataan" turned out to be a rather bloody movie with Robert Taylor and William Bendix, and some of my notes included same harsh criticism, such as "Hell of a lot of machine-gun fire", "Where did they get all this ammunition?", referring to the endless rounds of machine-gun fire Robert Taylor shot off at the Japanese enemy at the end of the film, without ever receiving any fresh supply of ammo from anyone, except MGM's overpaid scriptwriters. Obviously, the movie was meant to fortify the spirit of the Western audiences at this dramatic time more than a year before the end of the war in Asia.

These and other critical flaws rubbed me the wrong way and I entered them in my old diary just as I was about to cross the street. I looked left and right for any traffic coming my way, when I felt a heavy hand on my shoulder and a brusque voice asking me what I thought I was doing. It turned out to be a "bobby" - - a London policeman.

Obviously, I considered it rather strange to be stopped by a cop for no other reason than writing something into my diary. I asked him why he would even question me like this; I did not consider it a crime to add a few notes to my diary. Plainly my answer did not please him, because he literally snatched the diary out of my hand - - the German diary with my military-movie entries - - and he concentrated on it for a few seconds, muttering aloud some of my entries about "ammunition" and "machine-gun fire," and already the next second he pointed to the left, and to my surprise I became aware of a

long column of soldiers approaching us (probably on their way to the Second Front in France).)

The cop asked me what I was doing with a German diary in London, why I was staring at the approaching column of soldiers and on top of it making military entries into that German diary. I explained to him that I wasn't making military entries about the approaching column of soldiers but about the Hollywood movie I just saw and that I had found the diary in an old jacket of mine I hadn't worn in years.

By that time a pretty large crowd of onlookers had gathered and within seconds I heard some in the crowd explaining to others that the bobby had captured a German spy. This rumor was then reinforced when the cop grabbed me by the arm and told me in no uncertain terms not to resist and to accompany him quietly to the nearest police station. He then pushed me ahead of him through the angry mob, with one teenager actually spitting at me, although in retrospect I must confess that the walk to the police precinct was mercifully short in the vicinity of Caledonian Road.

In the station house, the copper informed the desk clerk that he was sure he had captured a Nazi spy from Germany and as evidence produced my German diary with the incriminating movie notes. The desk clerk studied the diary, nodded briefly and proceeded to take me to a holding pen, telling me to wait.

I protested that I had to be home by a certain time because as an "enemy alien" in Great Bfitain my nightly curfew started at 11 p.m. when I had to be indoors, but the sergeant assured me not to worry since the curfew did not apply to prisoners and that I should cause no further trouble and wait.

And so I was locked up in the holding pen, which turned

out to be a one-man cell near the registration desk.

Probably because of the historical date - D-Day - it turned out to be a quiet night for London's police stations; no crimes were being committed, no suspicious characters (except for me) and no drunks had been picked up, so the entire staff at this precinct could concentrate on me, the suspected Nazi spy, something - if confirmed - could bring fame, if not fortune, to this ward.

Although I had a clear conscience and was surprisingly calm for the simple reason that [illegible] this was England and not Nazi Germany, I did wait with bated breath for whatever fate would befall me.

Finally, after about another hour's wait, two men in civvies arrived and both of them introduced themselves as members of Scotland Yard. (I would have thought that members of MI-5 would have been more appropriate to handle a case involving a probable spy.) They introduced themselves by name, but almost sixty years later I cannot recall them, except that they also mentioned their rank as inspectors. This time I was guided by them into a completely whitewashed room; except for a number of chairs and a ceiling light focusing on my face, it was totally bare.

Here, at long last, the two Scotland Yard detectives, the cop who had arrested me near the cinema, and the captain of the police station started to grill me relentlessly, although after a little while the Scotland Yard men begged the others to withhold their questions and let them do their job, for which they had been commissioned and summoned.

Certain that I had nothing to fear, I did not mind in the least being grilled by them about my present and especially about my past. I was 21 years old at the time.

The usual easy questions were asked: Where I lived, my birthplace and birthdate, what my job was, whether I was married or had any relatives in the country. I wish I could have told them about the Holocaust, but at that time the word Holocaust as it applied to the Nazi period did not yet even exist/and I still hoped to find my family alive once the Allies had won the War, of which I was certain at that juncture, especially on that particular day when the Allies had already got the first foothold on the continent of Europe and Hitler's armies had lost the first major battle in the West.

But for the time being I could at least produce my "enemy alien" card, which all Austrian and German refugees not in the British armed services had to take along outside their home at all times, and I volunteered that they could check with my landlady, Mrs. Carrot, at 302 Camden Road, but they appeared to be much/more interested in my answers regarding Nazi Germany and my experiences under Hitler in Berlin.

Oddly enough, the more information I gave them about my family's persecution in Germany and my arrival in 1939 with a Kindertransport, the more suspicious they became about me. Everything about me seemed so pat, so perfect, so innocent, so well documented, that only a perfect spy could have given/such corroborating answers. Innocent people had flaws in their replies; guilty people had it all worked out and had prepared themselves for all eventualities in case of capture.

I did not follow their reasoning, If I was so smart with all my answers, I defended myself, /why would I be so stupid as a spy and write notes on a crowded London street about an approaching regi-

ment of Tommies in broad daylight in a German diary?

And they said that a stupid spy probably would. They obviously craved the fame and honor of catching a Nazi spy on D-Day. They fired questions at me hour after hour, left and right, but even though I never considered myself a superman I did have a clear conscience and answered everything truthfully and completely and the result was that it made them more and more suspicious. They never lost their cool, though, and remained extremely polite, gentlemanly, smiling, almost friendly to a fault.

Even so, by 10 p.m., the police captain offered me hot tea and crumpets and everybody at the station house actually shared this late evening snack with me, still as amiable as ever. I tried to explain to them that I arrived in England at the age of 16 and that it was hardly Hitler's idea to send young boys to their country and conduct acts of sabotage, especially when there was plenty of evidence to prove that I had been working in London in a war factory, prior to that as a gardener, and lately as a social worker, but the detectives maintained that this was just a cover to perform my job as a spy, although as an incompetent spy. I offered the two detectives another suggestion: Why didn't they come along with me to my room and go through all my belongings in the boarding house in which I lived and see whether they could come up with anything smelling of espionage. Ahh, they said, that would be too easy; maybe I had another room somewhere from where I'd send morse codes to the enemy. When I explained to them that I always came home at night right after my job as a social worker in the Bloomsbury House and could not possibly have or afford another dwelling place,

they dismissed my latest alibi as very suspicious, as being too perfectly thought up, because the more proof I produced as being a harmless member of society the greater their suspicion of me being the perfect espionage agent. "In other words," I ventured, "the more I can prove my innocence the more guilty I'm turning out to be in your eyes."

"Exactly, my dear fellow," one of the "dicks" chuckled. Plainly, these two detectives could have been the role models for some of the characters in George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four."

I was at my wit's end. I had gone to the movies in the late afternoon and ended up that day as England's greatest spy catch of 1944!

Perhaps it was desperation at that late juncture, perhaps inspiration, but suddenly I remembered the man mostly responsible for my welfare in England during World War II: Sir Eustace Pulbrook, the chairman of Lloyds of London, and his son Roger, one of my best friends. I suggested to the two inspectors that if they did not trust my words, why didn't they get in touch with Sir Eustace Pulbrook? This put a sudden brake on their cross-examination of me. One of the Scotland Yard men had heard of Sir Eustace and angrily frowned at me for possibly putting an end to their joyful game of landing a top spy in their professional net.

His frown even deepened further when I gave him Sir Eustace's private telephone number. Then, in my presence, he called Sir Eustace around midnight, explaining to him the Kuttner-case in a few words, and even though I could not clearly understand the words at the other hand, Sir Eustace, whom I was privileged to call "Doody," angrily barked into the telephone, and I could well imagine that it must have been a mouthful,

a virtual tirade that meant to sting from one of the top businessmen in the British Empire, when their empire was still an empire.

You could see the Scotland Yard detective on the phone cringe, listening to Sir Eustace's stream of abuse and vituperation, or even worse, and after a few minutes the detective apologized for waking Sir Eustace and promised to release me immediately.

Visibly shaken, the detective told me please not to make any more entries into my German pocketbook-diary and informed me that I was free to leave. I explained to him that if I was stopped by a policeman on the street at that late hour as an "enemy alien" I would be arrested again. Both the Scotland Yard men and the police captain agreed with me and said they would take me home in their cars.

They wrapped up a piece of cake for me, asked if I wanted another cup o' tea, and then, with the escort of a police cruiser, the Scotland Yard men drove me in their car to my not-too-distant home and wished me a good night.

In retrospect I came to the conclusion that that evening proved to be more exciting than "Bataan."

In a bit of an anti-climax that day, I remember entering the house I lived in on Camden Road (it's been replaced by a minor skyscraper), where a package was waiting for me upstairs in my room. It contained four pairs of my socks that a former dear officemate of mine - Hazel Thomas - had mended for me. From 1942 until the week I left for the U.S. in November 1947 Hazel had always stitched up the holes in my laundered socks since with our strictly rationed war- and post-war clothing coupons we were entitled to buy only four pairs per year. In exchange for her Samaritan labor I did send Hazel my "sweets"

(candy and chocolate) coupons because she craved sweets the way an alcoholic yearns for another Scotch. This meant, of course, that,in turn,throughout most of the war and for two-and-a-half years thereafter I never tasted any candy and was deprived of the wonderful Cadbury's Dairy Milk chocolate bars that I could only dream of at the time.

On second thought, perhaps it helped to provide me with the near-perfect set of teeth I still have plus the fact that I never suffered from a toothache in my life.

Also, in retrospect, it seems more than a bit strange that within the matter of one year I should have been confronted with two run-ins involving Scotland Yard (see my chapter "A Tearful Encounter with Scotland Yard. 1943."),

DOODLEBUGS WERE NO LAUGHING MATTER. (1944)

It proved to be a day that never entered the history books, but it left an indelible mark on my mind. And my leg. In fact, it happened in London on December 14, 1944, an icy-cold but sunny day, while I was returning from lunch to my Bloomsbury House office-job as a social worker for juvenile refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria.

Airraid sirens had ceased operating in July 1944, ever since the Nazis first despatched their V-1 pilotless planes on June 13 every four minutes from the Dutch and French coastline until their engine "conked out" over the British capital, exploding exactly seven seconds later on impact and causing untold casualties and enormous destruction. Many of these pilotless planes loaded with 2,000 lb. of explosives, were shot down even before reaching the British Isles, crashing into the Channel, but a huge number of them did succeed in breaking through the barrier of anti-aircraft guns as well as of fighter planes put up by the RAF and USAF. (Actually, I was watching Hedy Lamarr's 1932 debut movie "Ekstase" on Tottenham Court Road when the first V-1 hit London.)

In December, however, when I heard the V-1 engine cease operating and there followed that eery silence of seven seconds, I frantically looked for shelter running down High Holborn. To no avail. The V-1 missile, referred to as "doodlebug" in England for its roaring on-and-off sound while in flight, suddenly could be heard whooshing down from the heavens, its shadowy menace brushing less than a hundred feet overhead like a gigantic eagle picking its victims, and a second later it struck the ground not even fifty yards from me with such violent and deadly force that its explosive power literally sucked the breath out of my lungs and flung me, like a dead bird, into the gutter, an immediate piercing pain racing up and down my left leg.

= My trouser leg had been torn to shreds and ribbons, and suddenly the blood came pouring out of the wound in my calf, seeping into my shoe. Although I was in the prime of my life - 22 years old - nothing had prepared me for the sudden red-hot knife that seemed to be carving up and down my leg in the most sadistic circular-saw fashion.

But there I lay. Around me more than a dozen dead and wounded pedestrians lay among the broken glass shards, which uncharacteristically scintillated like a billion diamonds in the sunshine.

Like the other survivors, I screamed for help, but most pedestrians had taken shelter in doorways or under parked cars and a few people were actually sobbing with pain as they tried to remove tiny and large glass splinters from their arms and legs into which they had been embodied, picking at them like monkeys in a zoo removing fleas from their bodies.

I raised myself on an elbow, whipping my other arm in the air, crying in agony from the wound in my leg that seemed to pour out gallons of blood into the gutter and literally down the drain as well as realizing that I was in dire distress and needed immediate help before possibly bleeding to death. I wanted to live and begged God to give me another chance, that it wasn't fair to die in the gutter, and when I literally screamed in total and utter despair: "God, don't let me die!",a G.I. appeared out of the blue, like a deus ex machina, leaning over me.

I wanted to say something to make him understand how badly I was hurt, but I couldn't; the red-hot agony of the wound strangled my vocal chords and tears of helplessness blinded my eyes.

Without asking where I was hit or hurt, the soldier simply lifted me out of the gutter, soiling his spick-and-span uniform

with my blood, and carried me down a side street, where he hailed a cab and plumped me into the soft seat of the interior. All he did was to give the cab driver instructions to take us to the nearest hospital, offering him at least five "bob," then slung one of my arms around his neck at the destination and, supporting me as much as he could, scrambled past fallen debris into the hospital reception area where he surrendered me to the care of the medical staff.

Tears of agony scalding my eyes, the nurses placed me gently on a stretcher and wheeled me into the O.R. I wanted to say something to the G.I., but he stayed behind, being prohibited from entering the operation theater, yet even here I had to wait my turn while a nurse washed and cleaned my wound. Through the stinging tears I could make out a number of casualties being treated for wounds much more life-threatening than mine, but at a time like this patients do not consider the agony of others, being fully occupied with their own state of misery and self-pity.

Finally, though, it was my turn to be wheeled under the bright O.R. lamps and I was given an injection that numbed the pain in my wounded leg but not my mind. A small army of doctors and nurses ripped up the torn trouser leg even further, pulled off my shoe and sock and started to poke around with scalpels and more pointed instruments to remove the bomb splinters. They rolled me with great difficulty on my belly, never asked me a single question and proceeded to what appeared to me to dig a huge hole into my left calf. Some nurses constantly dabbed the sweating foreheads of the surgeons and repeatedly pulled off their rubber gloves replacing them immediately with brandnew ones. Virtually no words were being exchanged even at this delicate stage of the operation, and through my tears of self-pity I observed a thoroughly professional

team of medics perform a feat of doctorial perfection without parallel or so much as a sound except for the metallic clink of the discarded surgical instruments. A vague burning sensation submerged into my conscious as they at long last sutured up the gaping wound. I was given an injection, probably to prevent any inflammation or worse, and another team of nurses silently wound a mile of gauze and cotton wool around the offending wound, then wheeled me quickly out of the O.R. while the doctors and nurses scrubbed their hands and the next patient with a gaping wound in his temple was wheeled into the room.

One of the nurses put on my sock and shoe, handed me a page of clothing coupons so that I could buy another rationed pair of trousers, padded my cheek and motioned to somebody off-scene. It was my savior, the G.I. with the tan army shirt bloodied from my wound. She whispered something to him and both of them cradled their arms on each side of me under my back and raised me slowly up in a sitting, then a standing position. The nurse handed me some pills in case the pain later became unbearable, then returned to the O.R. and I was left alone with my "Yank."

Without a word, he supported me gently under my armpit to the elevator, guided me slowly into it, and both of us descended to street level. Here we laboriously made our way along a corridor full of moaning patients on a dozen or so stretchers and I realized how fortunate I had been not to be injured seriously as any of these luckless victims. Outside on the street, the wintery cold and sunlight hurt my eyes and I knew that I would have to take an aspirin once I got home. The American corporal asked me where I lived, hailed another cab, gave the driver a pound note and instructed him to take me home.

Weak, in agony, self-pitying and a bit confused by the shock

of being wounded, I plopped into the taxi's soft backseat and only realized after the cab had started to move down the street that the American soldier was not with me, that I had not even been in the condition to say Thank You to him. I leaned forward to the cab driver and ordered him to make an immediate U-turn to find this gallant Unknown Soldier. My voice must have been so urgent and commanding that he really made a U-turn, much to the displeasure of other honking automobiles, and I craned my neck out of the rolled-down window but neither the driver nor I could locate him anywhere. He had simply done his Samaritan deed of the day and then vanished forever from my life.

Tears of relief of having survived this disaster and tears of regret that Fate would not even let me shake the hand of this wonderful American soldier cruised down my cheeks. Would he think I was ungrateful not to have expressed a few words of gratitude to him? Or would he just shrug it off like Chaplin in a two-reeler when at the end the Little Tramp defied the ingratitude of the world with his own triumphant exit down the long/dusty road of life?

To my everlasting shame, today - about sixty years later - I cannot even remember what this remarkable, selfless guy looked like! Only a small remaining scar at the bottom of my left wade reminds me almost every day when I put on my socks in the mor-~~ning of the kind of/person that I sometimes feel must have been a uniformed messenger from heaven.~~ valiant

~~To come down to earth/ from a purely statistical and histo-~~ again,
~~rical point of view, the Nazis launched 8000 V1 rocket bombs, of which 2400 landed in London, with the rest of them being brought down by the RAF's Spitfire-Tempest fighters, anti-aircraft guns~~

ning what kind of a rare and valiant person I probably owed my life to, that even to this day I sometimes feel he must have been a uniformed messenger from heaven.

Oddly enough, the following mid-morning already something most tragic happened, of which the public was not even made aware until the news was released over the BBC nine days later, on Christmas Eve 1944: A light Canadian Norseman aircraft had been missing since December 15 while on its way to France and had to be considered lost over the Channel. The passenger on it was, to my way of thinking, the finest band leader of the 20th century: Glenn Miller. I truly mourned his death.

Even to this day it has not been ascertained exactly why the plane crashed into the sea, although there are different schools of thought about its tragic end.

But to come down to earth again, from a purely military and statistical point of view, the Nazis launched 8000 V-1 rocket bombs from the continent, of which "only" 2400 landed in London, with the rest of them being brought down by the USAF and the RAF's Spitfire-Tempest fighters, by clusters of anti-aircraft guns and captive balloons raised sky-high on steel-cables, forcing enemy planes to altitudes where precision bombing became impossible. (These balloons were nicknamed Blimps after David Low's hefty cartoon character Colonel Blimp.)

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As far as the V-2 liquid-oxygen propellent rockets were concerned, 1100 of them actually reached England, causing 9,000 casualties, according to the Encyclopaedia Britannica.

Not surprisingly, the latter's primary engineer, Wernher von Braun, later became the head of America's NASA, and in 1969 he was chiefly responsible for successfully developing and launching Apollo 11 with its U.S. astronauts to the Moon. He became probably the only person in twentieth-century history to be honored personally both by Adolf Hitler and by an American President, John F. Kennedy.

Still, like millions of other men and women in Great Britain I tried to serve that country as well as I could during the war, doing my bit both in agriculture and munitions and finally as a social worker helping some of the less fortunate refugees to survive. Inbetween, at night, as a member of the AFS (Auxiliary Fire Service) I did my "national service" stint and was blessed to survive some of the worst of the post-1940 blitz attacks by the Luftwaffe and even helped to extinguish a few fires in the northwestern part of London.

In fact, my nocturnal senses had become so conditioned to the explosion of bombs in my neighborhood that there were post-war nights, after May 1945, when I woke up with a start and seemed certain that I had heard the blare of an airraid siren. But then I dropped back on my pillow and with a feeling of gratitude recalled that immortal spectacle of May 8 - V.E. Day - that wonderful afternoon with me standing on the rim of the Queen Victoria memorial in front of Buckingham Palace and cheering myself hoarse with a million Britons, Yanks and other foreigners and all of us singing "Bless 'em All" as the Royal Family

and a smiling Winston Churchill waved merrily back to us from the palace's long balcony.

Happy memories!

And yet, even on that fabulous and truly unique occasion, tiny wartime reminiscences would flit back and forth in my mind: particularly those narrow escapes from death that most of us Londoners had experienced during the war, like the time I had visited the Holloway Gaumont cinema one afternoon the year before, then came home to listen to one of my favorite weekly BBC broadcasts called The Brains Trust, in which the brilliant Professor Joad was the star and always observed each time he lacked a definite response: "It depends what you mean." With the result that this phrase sneaked into the vernacular in England.

I had just finished listening to that program when I heard a terrible explosion outside and learned only the following day that a Nazi V-1 Flying Bomb had hit and destroyed the Holloway Gaumont, killing everybody inside. They were showing "A Tree Grows in Brooklyn" starring Dorothy McGuire.

And so many submerging wartime memories flitted to and fro inside my mind as I cheered Churchill and the Royal Family, even remembrances such as watching Laurence Olivier and Ralph Richardson the year before in "Peer Gynt" at the Old Vic, and a few months later having a long chat with Gerhard Kempinski, whose Jewish family had, at one time, owned Berlin's best-known restaurant at Kurfürstendamm 15, and now he was not only the boss again of his own eating establishment near London's Regent Street, but also a regular bit player in English films portraying Nazi officers. Moreover, he did remember my father, who fre-

quented Kempinski's in the early 1930s, since he lived only a few blocks from that renowned restaurant.

Late in 1947, after Gerhard had returned to Berlin and while helping to wait on tables in his old restaurant during a particularly busy lunchtime, he collapsed on the floor and died of a heart attack. A dear friend of mine, the Berliner Erna Stoll, told me about this tragedy a few days later, something that obviously depressed me very much. And when I got home that day to my place on Camden Road, I found a letter waiting for me from Hazel Thomas, who for years had mended my socks in exchange for my sending her my "sweets" coupons, that she had met the man of her dreams in the Swiss health spa of Grindelwald and was planning to marry him. Good and bad news seemed to militate against me that week, because, furthermore, the father of my former employer Paul Philipp, for whom I had worked in the plastic business, suffered a stroke that same week and died a few days later.

I tried to bunch all this personal news up into an article for the Swiss weekly Der Weg, on which my uncle Hans was one of the editors and where I had my London reports published for a couple of years already, but he declined to print up such intimate news in the paper as being too personal. What I did not write to my uncle was the fact that my lovely girlfriend Sylvia Berliner that same week, after seeing the anti-racial movie "Deep Are the Roots" with me, sprang the news on me in London's Green Park that she would not marry me or emigrate with me to America since her parents insisted that she marry only an Orthodox Jew. But at least the following day somebody still took a picture of us and our mutual friend Rhoda during lunchtime on Bedford Square, a photo I still own.

FOUR FEET IN THE GRAVE. (1944)

It was one of the coldest English winters on record last century - - the wartime winter of 1944-45, with very little heat to warm our freezing bodies.

At the time I was 22 years old and had recently been hired as a social worker in London's Bloomsbury House near Tottenham Court Road, and one of my assignments there was to look after teenage refugees from Nazi Germany and Austria who had landed in trouble either with their landladies, employers, neighbors or the police. One of my colleagues at the time was a refugee from Austria in his late fifties, a burly, spectacled, little man with a wine-red face which - he explained to me - was due to high blood pressure. This man - Adolf Rotenberg - turned out to be a most industrious worker who frequently explained to me during lunchtime how lonely he felt. Evidently his wife, an Aryan, would not accompany him to England in 1939, preferring to remain in her native Vienna under the Nazis.

Adolf pined for her every day in his conversations with me, calling her one of Vienna's most beautiful women, and frequently he'd show me a tattered old photo of her, which reminded me of the old adage that beauty is in the eye of the beholder.

As a matter of fact, he insisted that we always call him by his surname since, for obvious reasons, he did not want to be publicly addressed as Adolf. So, henceforth, this story will now do him the honor and name him by his last name.

Then, one day in December 1944, Rothenberg did not show up for work. The day before, he had complained of a terrible headache to me and we assumed that he had fallen victim to the flu which had spread like wildfire all over England that horrible winter. We

tried to reach him by phone, but there was no answer. Somebody in my office suggested that it might even be possible that the apartment building in which Rotenberg lived in London's Golders Green district might have been hit by one of the V-1 Flying Bombs, the pilotless planes the Nazis were dispatching every seven minutes, day and night, since the early summer of 1944 to hit civilian targets, mostly in London.

However, when Rotenberg still had not called us three days after his initial absence, we did get a bit suspicious about his absence since he proved to be a stickler for dependability. Again we called his number, but there was no response. The following day we decided to get in touch with the Metropolitan Police, explaining our case, and then asked them to check on him in Golders Green.

The following day, a copper came to our office and informed us that they had found Rotenberg dead in his bed. Evidently he had suffered a fatal heart-attack while sleeping.

My immediate supervisor, Mrs. Hardisty, a dignified hard-working lady in her eighties, made it her business to make immediate arrangements for Rotenberg's burial in the London Jewish cemetery of Willesden. Unfortunately Rotenberg had no relatives in England; moreover, he proved to be an intensely private person and consequently did not have any personal close friends, except for those he had made in the office.

On the day of the burial, Mrs. Hardisty closed our office and we started out to the cemetery. It was a truly bitterly cold day; the wind cut razor-sharp into our faces and after a brief service we followed the coffin on top of a wheelbarrow being pushed to the plain, flowerless gravesite. There were only about half a dozen of us shivering co-workers gathered around

the grave as the coffin was slowly being lowered. After it came to rest on the bottom of the grave, it became our religious duty to step as close as possible to the rim of his final resting place and cast a pebble or two and some loose earth onto the coffin.

When it finally was my turn, I must have misjudged the loose soil at the edge of the grave site because just as I leaned forward to cast my handful of earth and pebbles on the coffin, the soil underneath my feet caved in and I slid, feet first, into the grave, right on top of my friend's coffin.

My head did not even reach the top rim of the grave and, embarrassed as I was due to my own clumsiness, I struggled frantically - clawing the earth desperately - to climb out of the grave. People above me shouted that I should not desecrate the burial site, the sacred ceremony, and I pulled off my gloves, trying to dig my frozen fingers and the tips of my shoes into the iron-hard soil, and then attempted my darndest to haul myself up with all my strength.

However, the soil would not yield; the earth stubbornly did its best to materialize itself into an impenetrable crust. I could not make so much as a dent in it, let alone a notch into which I could plant my booted feet. I explained to the complaining mourners above me that I needed some assistance to get out of the grave, and my employer, the 81-year-old Mrs. Hardisty, who had helped countless refugee youngsters pull themselves up by their bootstraps, Samaritan-like held out her gloved right hand to me to yank me up. I gratefully accepted her helpful gesture. But frail and weakened by age as she was, the dear woman, instead of pulling me up, was literally catapulted forward by my desperate attempt to propel myself up and flew through the air, landing beside me at the other end of Rotenberg's coffin.

All hell broke loose then. People above us started cursing me that I was desecrating the ceremony and insulting the memory of Adolf Rotenberg. Mrs. Hardisty started berating me too, angrily and rather childishly stamping her foot on the coffin, telling me that I would not get a raise for Christmas, which was just a few days away. Feeling hurt as the innocent party I imagined myself to be, I defended myself rather strenuously and explained that my rent had been increased and I really needed the extra money.

Above me people raved that this was not the right time and place to discuss financial matters until I finally lost my temper too and shouted from the bottom of the grave that people should help us get out of this burial quandary rather than to give advice on what topics to debate in a situation like this.

Somebody in a true Judeo-Christian spirit at last produced a sturdy long branch that had been felled by the snowstorm the night before. I grabbed Mrs. Hardisty's gloved hands and fastened them around the middle-part of the branch, pleading with her not to let go in spite of her advanced age, her frailness, then shouted to the quintet of grumbling mourners above us to yank her up quickly before her strength gave out. They did so immediately, with moans and groans, and succeeded in a matter of seconds, although Mrs. Hardisty finally burst into tears, either with relief at having been saved from an untimely grave or from the shock and utter disgrace of experiencing this unceremonious happening in public.

Next, the rescuers lowered the branch for my benefit and without too much difficulty I could drag myself up into the arms of my huffing and puffing office co-workers. Mrs. Hardisty stepped forward and stared, hard and unforgiving, at my sorry person; she was shaking all over and I felt convinced she was going to fire

me there and then. Within a second her pale frozen features dissolved and she burst again into tears, whether of relief or helplessness I don't know. I, and my co-workers, did not quite know how to react to this unprecedented situation and just stared at her. Usually it turned out to be the other way around when it was her who had to soothe ruffled feathers with crying youngsters, This time, though, we stood all of us perilously close to the open grave and rather than give a repeat performance of this sorry spectacle, I gently nudged old Mrs. Hardisty by the elbow away from the gravesite whereupon she flung her arms around my neck and started to sob heartbreakingly, stammering how wonderful it was to be alive and not end up in an icy grave as it almost had been our fate.

I agreed with her, feeling the same way about it. She turned - Rupin, Walesby, Finch, Fischbein and Silberstein - to the others that we should all have some hot tea and crumpets somewhere and that she would treat us to "the pictures" after that.

The hot tea, indeed, warmed our frozen bodies after a brief stay at a restaurant, but then we paid a visit to the cinema and saw the original "Gaslight," starring the former Austrian movie star Adolf Wohlbrück, as the murderer, who had wisely renamed himself Anton Walbrook in England, meaning that the day we came to bury one Adolf, we delighted in booing a screen-Adolf! Even better, the truly world-famous Adolf also was well on the way to meeting his Maker.

Another interesting sidelight: One of the ladies with whom I shared a large office in London's Bloomsbury House was Lola Hahn-Warburg. As early as 1933 she had already foreseen the tragic persecution of anybody considered Jewish by the Nazis, and much of the later success of the Kindertransport is due to her unstinting /

efforts on our behalf after her arrival in England in the mid-1930s. Although independently wealthy, she considered it her duty to work secretarially for us young refugees without a salary for eight hours every weekday, year after year.

To get back to basics, though, as far as the less mundane and more etheral spirit of this chapter is concerned, I must admit that personally I consider myself more closely related to a spiritual after-life, as Hegel and Nietzsche characterized it, after drawing my own final breath in the future, rather than to a more questionable Goethean soul of mine floating around in all kinds of weather, getting hot, wet and iced in God's cosmos.

THE BEST NEWS AND THE WORST NEWS. (1945)

Final partings can be melodramatic or uneventful. My mother was only in her fifties when I last saw her at the age of sixteen on February 8, 1939 at the Charlottenburg railroad station in Berlin, a bitter-cold day. Hugging her for the last time at around six in the morning and feeling the cool Eau-de-Cologne-scented skin of her pale cheeks against mine is a sensation that my psyche refuses to abandon well over sixty years later, and then to taste my mother's salty tears running down my cheeks onto my lips that plainly did not want this moment to ever end, somehow sensing that I would never again feel her indescribable maternal love for me, and then finally to embrace my darling sister Annemarie and simultaneously wondering whether I'd be lucky enough to ever see her again...all of this nightmarish farewell in the semi-dark of the railroad station for no other reason than that a person with a Chaplin moustache, who did not even know that the family I left behind existed, simply made up his mind ten or twenty years before that it was the way his empire had to be run and no other way.

Ironically, on the seventh anniversary of Kristallnacht, November 9,1945, my office superior and social-case worker, Mr. Rupin, summoned me to his room in London's Bloomsbury House, where I was employed as a social worker looking after young German and Austrian refugee boys and girls from the Third Reich, and he informed me that he had some good news and some bad news for me. Which one did I want to hear first? I thought he was referring to some current personal problem - for example, like having to criticize me for a wrong decision I had made in my job, and I opted for him letting me have the bad news first.

In a few words, and without beating about the bush, he informed me he had received a verified news report from Germany that my mother's

name was among the Nazi lists captured by the Allies, which established the fact that she had been gassed in Auschwitz in 1944.

For almost a whole year after the end of World War II in Europe I had hoped with all my heart and with desperately sincere nocturnal prayers that God grant me the wish to see my beloved family again alive, a family that had never done any harm to anybody, yet of which I already knew that these dear people must have ended up eventually in some concentration camp but hopefully had now been returned to Berlin, or in the case of my grandmother to Hamburg...well, my teary-eyed request from God simply/stated and naively that I could close them all again into my arms, even though they would be emaciated from years of torture, starvation and cold - - all undeservedly so - - and that I could at least kiss my mother's eau-de-Cologned cold cheeks again and feel her maternal love give me new strength, new hope for the future, and I could weep with joy and cry out that God, Yahweh, Allah indeed was all-merciful and all-forgiving.

But then I realized that God in all His wisdom, as the various sects, faiths, religions in their houses of worship proclaim worldwide, that this God had/other ideas, a different solution for her, for my father, for my mother's mother, a Final Solution, and I wept heartbreakingly for at least an hour, seeing my hopes dashed, my faith shaken, until Mr. Rupin produced a cup of hot tea to still my nerves.

In heartless cold statistics my parents belonged to the 55,696 Jews and non-Aryans of Berlin murdered by the Nazis. Period. No good making a fuss over that figure sixty-five minutes or sixty-five years afterwards. Was it Eichmann who had said that losing one person senselessly is a tragedy; losing millions of people is a statistic?

Holding the cup in my trembling hands,I sipped from that calming hot brew and only the tears added a soupçon of bitterness to the tea, at least until I had calmed down sufficiently to ask Mr. Rupin if there had been any news about my father and maternal grandmother. He had not received any, at least not so far; (later I learned that their fate had also ended with being murdered by the Nazis, namely in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt in Czechoslovakia.) But Mr. Rupin informed me furthermore on this occasion that the other news was so good that I should allow myself at least to rejoice a bit now, because my sister Annemarie had survived the Holocaust and was alive and well in Berlin. Again my tears flowed unrestrainedly, this time with joy and gratitude that my darling sister was spared the horrible fate of my mother.

The commingling of death and life, of a mother lost forever and a sister regained, blinded my eyes with an unending stream of tears. I simply did not know whether to cry with sadness or laugh with happiness, and never in my life before or since have I experienced a brutal mixture of such heart-wrenching emotions ever again.

Needless to say, I sat down that night at my typewriter and wrote my sister a long letter of joy and gratitude that God at least had seen fit to save her for me, although to this day I could never understand why He took pleasure or showed total indifference watching the rest of my family to be so cruelly butchered in the Holocaust.Of course, this horrible fate was shared by countless millions and had been described in books and films galore,and yet the question remains: Why did millions take pleasure in destroying their innocent fellowmen?

Just take a look,for instance, at the macabre album confis-

cated from Kurt Franz, who as a commander of the Treblinka extermination camp in 1943 had personally supervised the gassing of some 900 000 Jews, then wrote about his work assignment there with glee and a job well done, heading his opus "The Best Years of My Life." (In 1993, Franz was released from his German prison.)

Of course, there were multitudes of other Nazis all over Europe who jubilated at the extermination process of "inferior" races, in particular German and Austrian, Ukranian and Polish civilians as well as Hitler's soldiers occupying foreign territory, with many of them writing home about this process of extermination, bursting with pride at a job well done, as the Nuremberg and other war-crime trials visibly demonstrated.

Secretly, some Jews and anti-Nazis managed to photograph these scenes of unspeakable horror, even during the Holocaust, like Mendel Grossman, who prior to his death in a Nazi camp, amassed 10,000 pictures of Poland's Lodz ghetto, while Yaffa Eliach succeeded in collecting 8,000 photos of her Lithuanian birthplace Eishyshok, where virtually all of its 3,500 Jews were shot by Nazi death squads on two September days in 1941. Of course, such massacres were repeated a thousand times throughout Nazi-occupied Europe during World War II. Even the Nazi propaganda machine made a point of filming these spectacles, actually planning to show the killer documentaries in a specially planned Czech museum once Hitler had won the war.

At least my sister had survived this mad mass slaughter, and I sent her as many items as I could afford from England's rationed peacetime food, such as cans of vegetable and fruit, powdered milk as well as stockings, underwear and sweaters, since Mr. Rupin had been able to obtain her address in the Neukölln district of Berlin.

Sheer joy filled my heart when I received her letters of gratitude and happiness from her Emserstrasse address that we had found each other after years of an unspeakable nightmare and that we should never lose sight of one another again. We never did, until her death in 1964 in New York.

Of course, there are people I always refer to as professional anti-Semites, who deny that there was a Holocaust. Some of them even claim that Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen never existed but were built by the Jews after the war to exact reparations from Germany and thus enrich their own pockets. History proves it was the other way around: Germany did not pay a penny of reparations to the Allies as they had to after Versailles; the U.S., in fact, paid twelve billion dollars to Germany and other European countries under the Marshall Plan shortly after WWII. It helped to convert West Germany into the economically most powerful nation on the continent.

Nevertheless, throughout this fruitful postwar era these professional anti-Semites not only kept denying that there was a Holocaust (while other pro-Nazis claimed that Hitler had not killed enough Jews), but they actually insisted that it was the Polish Jews who had started the war by trying to invade Nazi Germany. As ridiculous as this topsy-turvy idiocy appears to the rest of humanity, it brings to mind Chico Marx's movie quote to a husband when caught in bed with the man's wife: "Who are you going to believe - - me or your own eyes?"

Still, a secondary news item that sticks in my mind from 1945 is that only one neutral country in the West at the end of World War II, Ireland, actually had its ambassador to Berlin offer condolences to the crumbling Nazi government on the death of Adolf Hitler.

A TALE OF TWO PAULS. (1946)

After I had been trained by Mr. Rupin to become a social worker at the end of World War II in order to look after the welfare of refugee youngsters from Nazi Germany and Austria in England, the House of Commons suddenly curtailed its financial support to many refugee organizations, since the money at that time was more urgently needed elsewhere in the ailing postwar British capital and other English cities.

Nevertheles, Mr. Rupin did promise to rehire me as soon as there was an opening for me to fill my old spot, and on top of it he did manage to arrange for me to start an interim job, if I wanted to accept it, at a location nearby, at 3,Rathbone Place, just off Oxford Street in the hub of London, namely as an assistant of a Paul Philipp, who was running a rather lucrative enterprise in the plastc-cloth business.

Naturally I considered myself fortunate not to be unemployed even for as much as a single day, especially when the number of workless had been jumping by leaps and bounds due to the fact that a million members of the armed services were being demilitarized and, likewise, war factories and war-related work had also come to a standstill.

At the end of 1945 (and ever since) I had never had anything to do with plastics,and at that juncture in time plastics,anyway, happened to be even more of an unknown factor still than it was in Mike Nichols' (also a former refugee boy from Nazi Berlin,whose real name is Michael Peschkowsky) 1967 movie classic "The Graduate."

With a heavy heart I climbed two steep flights of stairs at 3, Rathbone Place and introduced myself to Mr.Philipp as someone who had never worked in plastics, but that I was willing to be trained by him and learn the trade. Mr. Philipp was a man in his late

thirties, an Orthodox Jew who regularly closed his office on Fridays an hour before sundown to return to his parents with whom he still lived near the northwestern part of London in Swiss Cottage. Evidently he liked my willingness to learn the trade and the fact that I was a refugee from Nazi Germany. He hired me on the spot but offered me only enough of a weekly salary that permitted me to just meet my basic expenses without being able to put anything aside for a rainy day. But what could I do? Better to live frugally , I figured, than to live luxuriously and go broke.

Mr. Philipp suggested after a month that we call each other by our first name - - Paul and Paul - - and a few months later already he invited me one Sunday afternoon for tea to his parents' home, where I was also to meet his fiancée, and although they appeared to me to be polite, I could simultaneously sense a distinct coolness toward me. They insisted on speaking to me about their orthodoxy and while I listened to them politely, it was impossible for me to reciprocate conversationally about my own distance from any kind of religious strictures and laws,which seemed to rule their own private lives to the exclusion of almost everything else.

When their conversation on that subject matter became increasingly inflamed and demonstrative, I finally had to admit that my heart and spirit usually froze at the mention of any kind of restraints in religious services,with the result that Paul's mother got to her feet to tell me pointblank that I better leave their premises. I could feel my heart thud demonstratively inside my chest, but I realized that it was senseless to trumpet my own point of view in the face of an iron-cled orthodoxy,regardless of a person's faith, and I wiped my mouth clean of some cookie crumbs,

then got up to leave and thanked them for their invitation. Paul accompanied me to the frontdoor and apologized to me for his mother's uncouth behavior. I told him that I did not feel offended, and that indeed there was no need to apologize, but that it turned out to be exactly that kind of straitlaced orthodox behavior in any faith that had turned me away from organized religion; also that I would always try my best to follow the commands of man's only God in Whom I sincerely believed, though not always in a loving way.

Although Paul continued to treat me most fairly and often invited me to have lunch with him - and indeed I could easily reciprocate his feelings for me - the entire employment arrangement, consisting merely of us two and noone else, turned my solitary work there into an enormous hardship for me when he was absent hunting for new customers.

Paul's business was flourishing and he did increase my salary amazingly often, although always only by a few shillings per week, but to me there appeared to be no end to this exhausting drudgery and incredibly boring assignment. Exhausting, because most of my daily labor from 8 to 5 consisted of carrying dozens of huge rolls of plastic sheets on rolls in all colors and thickness two or three times a day up the steep flights of stairs from the "lorries" to the storage room next to his office. During the winter months this back-breaking assignment was barely tolerable and did not faze me that much, but once the weather turned hot and clammy later that summer, the work became unbearable, if one keeps in mind that each of these plastic two-yard-wide rolls weighed between fifty and sixty pounds while I weighed just twice as much. True, I was young, reasonably strong and healthy, but by twelve noon I was bathed in perspiration and after a month or so began to realize that I had to bring a supply of shirts and underwear with me to the Rathbone Place office every morning, so I could change them

regularly at least twice each workday.

Not only did I begin to suffer from horrendous backpains at the crook of my spine early each afternoon after I had collapsed exhaustedly for my lunchtime by the open window and had my cucumber on rye and a glass of water while reading the "News Chronicle," but after a few months of this travail I had to swallow two or three aspirins at two p.m. every day to alleviate that excruciating backache.

Soon the rest of my body was beginning to show the effects of the "fruit of this labor." The tremedous weight of these plastic rolls aggravated my young body relentlessly by having to carry them up these flights of steep stairs, sometimes for a couple of hours at a time, with the result that they gradually began to rub away the skin of my right shoulder on which I carried this heavy load, but even worse, the bottom of my spine was pinched and almost crushed with each step I climbed up these creaky steps that I almost cried with pain; but then there was one other thing that rubbed me the wrong way.

Halfway up from streetlevel, next to a lavatory, lay the entrance to an apartment that Paul Philipp told me belonged to the brother of Ronald Neame. At that time, in the 1940s, one could almost claim that Ronald Neame had become a household name in Great Britain, because he happened to be one of the finest British cinematographers and directors in England for just about twenty years already, Some of Ronald's work goes back as far as working with Alfred Hitchcock on the latter's "Blackmail" in the 1920s, but he is best-known for his later triumphs as a cinematographer in Noel Coward's "In Which We Serve", "This Happy Breed" and "Blithe Spirit" as well as for his work on Shaw's "Major Barbara" and Dickens's " Great Expectations" and

"Oliver Twist."

Unfortunately, as far as I could determine, Ronald Neame's brother did not show any talent for anything and, according to Paul, he was completely supported by his illustrious film relative. How he could get away without serving in any part of the immediate post-war British economy I don't know, unless Ronald pulled certain strings with the governmental authorities.

But what was doubly annoying to Paul and me were the sexual orgies going on in the private quarters of this Neame fellow. Probably as often as half a dozen times a day, whenever I passed his frontdoor with one of those impossibly heavy rolls of plastic cloth, the door to the Neame apartment was opened to a seemingly endless supply of young men and quite frequently on those occasions when I happened to pass his door I could not help looking straight ahead and casting a glance into his large livingroom. What I then witnessed was a parade of spectacles that could only be described as a Greek-style series of sexual exhibitions. Sometimes as many as two or three couples could be observed performing fellatio or anal sex on each other on a bed and a sofa as well as on the carpet while a fully grown salad-green parrot in a huge cage screached high-pitched screams of laughter at the unfazed visitors.

Of course, neither Paul nor I were ever invited to join in these acts of sodomy, but after a few weeks of noting our industrious presence on the building's staircase, the gays did accept us as friendly or indifferent spectators to their lascivious acts of debauchery and left the door to Neame's private apartment wide open so as not to be interrupted in their acts of erotic salaciousness when a male newcomer in heat made his unannounced appearance. Homosexuality, like heterosexual behavior, I feel simply should be conducted behind closed doors, that's all!

After about eight months with Paul, I received a telephone call from Mr. Rupin at the Bloomsbury House that the British government had issued a new grant to the refugee organizations and that consequently I could resume my job as a social worker for German and Austrian refugee boys in London.

Paul did not like the idea at all of seeing me quit since he had hoped that I'd run the plastic business with him and he did offer me a considerable increase in salary if I stayed with him. However, it was not the money but the job and its future prospects in this business that did not appeal to me at all.

Nevertheless, Paul proved to be gracious enough finally to write a good reference for me on August 20, 1946, in which he said: "I can testify from experience that he (Paul Kuttner) is honest, straightforward, and that he possesses initiative and a sound outlook on all matters. His cheerful disposition makes it pleasant to work together with him."

We did have a couple of lunches the following year, and on those occasions he informed me that he had found a good replacement for me, a man my age, who was incredibly strong and loved lugging the rolls of plastic up to his office, but that Paul constantly had to work on the paperwork involved in receiving and selling the merchandize, which had also been my assignment with him. Finally, when I had settled in the United States, I did drop Paul a letter from Hollywood but never received a reply, and when I had asked a friend of mine in London several years later whether he'd be kind enough to give Paul my regards on the phone, my friend wrote back that he was no longer listed in the London phone book. Sic transit gloria mundi!

THE MAGIC OF ELEANOR ROOSEVELT. (1946)

Somehow my acquaintanceship with the widow of President Franklin D.Roosevelt, directly or indirectly, stretched over a period lasting more than half a century.

It all started in London, where I had lived through the second half of World War II in a boarding-house at 302 Camden Road. Oddly enough,this charming residence was occupied partly by members of the Royal Navy,who were studying to become medical doctors, and the other half by German and Austrian refugee boys from Nazi Germany, like myself, who were working in various locations in London during and after the war. Never throughout my stay in this boarding-house,which was run by the ever-industrious, petite and kindly Mrs. Carrot, did I hear one critical remark from any member of the Navy about our German ancestry, even when the military situation still favored Hitler's war machine and British naval forces suffered major losses at sea. My best friend at the time in the boarding-house was a brilliant student of mathematics and science from Germany, Max Caspari, who later emigrated to the U.S., where he became an outstanding student at the Massachussets Institute of Technology and in the late 1940s married a charming American girl with a wooden leg.

In fact, it was Max who first alerted me to the 1946 newspaper report, informing its readers that FDR's widow happened to be in London to discuss the United Nations Human Rights Commission to which she had been elected chairwoman early in 1946. The article also mentioned the London hotel where she was staying and this bulletin prompted me to retire to my room and, without a moment's hesitation, type a painfully heartfelt letter, pleading with the First Lady of the World whether it would be possible

for her to help me bring my sister Annemarie from Berlin, where she had lived underground during the war, to the United States, so that I could join her there from England.

At the time, literally millions of Europeans tried frantically to leave the wartorn European continent and start a new home and life for themselves in the U.S. Trans-Atlantic passenger planes were almost non-existent yet at the time and most of the vessels not sunk in the war were more urgently needed for the transport of U.S. military personnel back to the States and for food items to Europe under the Marshall Plan, that was mostly still in the discussion stage but had a precursor to ward off the worst of the famine reigning in most of Europe, so that any thought of sending refugees on ships to the Land of homogenized Milk and Honey happened to be for the most part still on the drawing board.

Still, what did I have to lose but a postage stamp? To be absolutely honest, I did not in a million years expect an answer from the First Lady, knowing full well how incredibly busy she was, quite apart from writing her newspaper column, the daily grind of conferences and/or meeting dozens of important personages seven days a week who relished to be in her presence.

Even in retrospect it is difficult to overemphasize my joy when only a week or so later I received a personal reply from her, dated February 11, 1946, in which she mentioned that she could not help anybody as much as the various refugee organizations that had been established everywhere after the war, but that for further personal assistance she would suggest, having been moved by my case, that I contact a Louise Morley at the American Embassy in London.

Of course, I expressed my gratitude to Mrs. Roosevelt in a letter the following day and immediately called Ms. Morley at the U.S.

Embassy on London's Grosvenor Square. Her secretary informed me at once that she'd arrange an appointment for me one afternoon a week later.

Even so I had to wait for about two hours at the embassy and when I was finally ushered into Ms. Morley's office and asked her whether she could expedite my sister's case in leaving post-war Berlin since she had suffered so much under the Nazis and that, to crown it all, she had been gang-raped by more than a dozen Soviet soldiers after Berlin had fallen to the Red Army, Ms. Morley displayed extreme concern for my sister's fate and assured me that she would try to help me in bringing my sister as a Displaced Person to the United States, but I should understand that there were literally millions of refugees like Annemarie who were trying their darndest to leave the hell that Hitler had created for them, and as an employee of the U.S.government who had to listen to hundreds of such horror stories, she simply could not afford to make an exception or give personal preferrences to any family member wishing to emigrate to the U.S. In fact, there had been hundreds of thousands of hopefuls already who had taken the opportunity to register before me and they had to be given priority, especially those victims who had been able to survive the untold tortures of Nazi concentration camps. Which meant that my sister would have to wait her turn before emigrating to the United States, and this could take another three or four years.

Naturally I was in no condition to argue with any of this, knowing only too well that there were millions of cases equally tragic and deserving of immediate consideration. Nevertheless,Ms. Morley gave me a questionnaire to fill out about the fate and

other particulars relating to Annemarie that I should mail back to the embassy, which would in turn forward it to the U.S. authorities in Berlin and then call Annemarie for an interview, a bureaucratic procedure that could take up to a year.

With a heavy heart and quite depressed, I put the documents to be filled out in my breast pocket, where I was stowing the letter I had received from Mrs. Roosevelt. I got up telling Ms. Morley it was a pity that not even Mrs.Roosevelt herself seemed to be able to help my sister, a remark that plainly puzzled her.

What did I mean by bringing up Mrs. Roosevelt at this juncture, she wanted to know, and I produced the letter the former First Lady had written me less than three weeks earlier. Within a second of reading it, Ms. Morley stood up,took me by the hand and guided me to a wooden bench outside another office, where I was asked to wait.

And wait I did. For a very long time. I wanted Annemarie to be safe in the U.S. and to join her there. Except for my mother, she was the greatest love of my life (and still is),and for me there proved nothing more important than to be near her again and take care of her, if not altogether financially, than at least emotionally, so that she would always have a moral support and never feel alone, deserted,again.

But sitting there and waiting for Ms. Morley to reappear, my mind reeled back , like in a movie flashback, when a month or two earlier, Mr. Rupin, my social caseworker in London's Bloomsbury House,had summoned me one wintery afternoon to his office and informed me that the Germans had found the names of my family members on some Nazi lists.For months I had desperately prayed to God every night not to let my family be among those

who had ended up as murdered victims of the Holocaust, but God had not answered my prayers and He probably grinned when my mother was pushed into a gas chamber in Auschwitz, and decades later, in 1981 to be exact, I received the official confirmation of my mother, father and maternal grandmother having been "terminated" during the Holocaust - - in fact, a note at the bottom of my mother's death notice emphasizes the fact that she had been a victim of the extermination process during the last Auschwitz gassing operation in November 1944. Both my parents had even served with the Germans during World War I; my father as a medical doctor with a German division and my mother as an army nurse stationed in Hamburg. Yet they were executed by the Nazis because of the religion-oriented Nuremberg laws. 1935. It will always be carved in my mind when the International Tracing Service in Arolsen, Germany, finally confirmed that my mother had been a victim of that last gassing operation in Auschwitz. The rest of my immediate family were murdered in Theresienstadt's concentration camp, and only my sister Annemarie was still alive. How true it is, that a single life snuffed out is a tragedy; the loss of a million lives a statistic.

But now I sat in the U.S. Embassy in London, hoping at least to remove my surviving sister from the heap of Berlin's rubble that still stank of its airraid victims; and it was with this idea in mind that I had written to Mrs. Roosevelt, and armed with her letter I now pleaded my sister's case to a bureaucrat named Ms. Morley. Annemarie's fate rested in her hands for the next few years.

And so it happened, when Ms. Morley finally went back with me to her desk, that she returned Mrs. Roosevelt's letter to me and explained that somebody at the embassy had just gotten in touch with the U.S. authorities in Berlin and given them all the information regarding my sister, also that Annemarie would be informed

shortly and given priority and that it was quite likely she'd already be in the States before year's end.

All I could do was to sit outside in the cold on a park bench in Grosvenor Square and smoke one Players after another to calm my nerves; the anticipation I felt seeing my sister again soon kept on ballooning inside me, but at long last I went home and wrote Annemarie a long letter, informing her of our not too distant reunion in the New World.

Ms. Morley proved to be right. That same year, in December 1946, Annemarie and her slightly older girlfriend, Ilse Loewenthal, arrived in New York and soon both of them had settled into a two-and-a-half room apartment at 63 West 100 Street in Manhattan, which at the time cost them thirty-eight dollars a montn.

Soon after my arrival in the States a year later,Annemarie and I wrote a thank-you note to Mrs. Roosevelt at her Hyde Park residency, but we were never sure whether she ever received that letter.

It must have been around 1950 that I read an article in The New York Times, which stated that Mrs.Roosevelt would be present at the inauguration of an exhibit at the New York Armory im Manhattan, and after I mentioned this to my sister both of us decided to attend that opening.

We had no difficulty entering the premises, which were quite crowded as a result of the star appeal of the former First Lady, and after an official had guided Mrs.Roosevelt around the exhibit, followed by a huge retinue, which also included my sister and me, and she was about to leave the building, bestowing on all of us one of her gracious rather toothy smiles, I gathered all my courage (or "chutzpah" as somebody later referred to it) and stepped forward, expressing my thanks to Mrs.Roosevelt perso-

nally for what she had been able to do for my sister, who stood silently, shaking and pale as a ghost, by my side.

Mrs. Roosevelt's smile vanished from her face and a tiny frown creased her famous brow.

"I am not sure at all what you are referring to," she said in her inimitable high-pitched voice that I had already heard as far back as during World War II in newsreels and on the BBC whenever she gave one of her famous radio chats.

At this point I reached into my pocket and withdrew the 1946 letter she had written me about consulting Miss Morley at the U.S. Embassy in London. Within seconds her face lit up and as she returned the letter to me, she asked if that letter had ever resulted in anything positive.

In response I took my sister's right arm and introduced her to Mrs. Roosevelt. At the same time, I kept her up-to-date that her letter had been instrumental in letting Annemarie enter the U.S. already the very year (1946) Mrs. Roosevelt had written it to me her in London rather than having had to wait three or four years longer in Berlin and that she now lived in a lovely apartment in Manhattan.

Eleanor Roosevelt's warm and gracious smile wreathed her face as she took my sister's hands in her own and pressed them in a genuinely heartfelt gesture.

"I'm so glad that I could be of some assistance to you," she said, "and that I can make your personal acquaintance on American soil. What are you doing now, my dear?"

Annemarie became more than a bit tongue-tied and whispered that she was employed as a dental assistant in Greenwich Village.

"And are you two living together?" the First Lady wanted to know.

"We only live a few blocks apart," Annemarie replied, her voice

already stronger and steadier, although her brief reply still revealed how emotionally overcome she was by this fateful encounter. But instead of enlarging on her response, she raised Mrs.Roosevelt's hand to her lips and kissed it as tears of gratitude at this overwhelming experience cruised down her pale cheeks.

As ever, Mrs. Roosevelt's reaction was gracious and loving. She smiled even more broadly, probably deeply moved herself by this heartfelt unexpected gesture, and simply said: "Thank you, my dear. I'm truly happy to meet you." She released Annemarie's hand and shook mine, then said good-bye to both of us and left the exhibition hall.

Mrs. Roosevelt died in 1962; my wonderful sister Annemarie two years later of bone cancer, aged 51.

One tiny postscript to this story: About half a century after this fateful encounter took place, I read in TIME that the well-known writer Blanche Wiesen Cook was working on the final volume of a trilogy describing Eleanor Roosevelt's life. Within days I found out Ms.Cook's address from the Authors Guild, of which I am a member, and I wrote her a two-page single-spaced letter about my experiences with Mrs. Roosevelt. In the letter I asked Ms.Cook whether she would be interested in including this event in her final volume of the Eleanor Roosevelt biography.

A few days later I received a most gracious telephone call in which Ms. Cook thanked me profusely for my letter and even apologized for her tardiness in expressing her gratitude for my volunteering this information, but she had been away and just come back. Yes, she definitely would include my episode in this final volume since it illustrated Ms. Roosevelt's generosity and warmheartedness perfectly.

ADIEU, ADIR, AND OTHER GOOD-BYES. (1948)

It became quite difficult for my sister Annemarie in New York to find somebody to provide an affidavit for me so that I could follow her from London across the Atlantic to the U.S.

In an exchange of letters between Annemarie and my cousin Ilse Fraenkel, who still lived with her sister Ulla and mother Lotte in the beautiful house bordering the darkly romantic Volksdorf Forest just outside Hamburg, Annemarie learned that a former girlfriend of Ilse's had emigrated to the U.S. more than a decade before the outbreak of World War II and become quite a well-known stage actress in New York. In fact, only a few months earlier she had received rave reviews as Desdemona opposite Paul Robeson on Broadway in Shakespeare's "Othello." Her name: Uta Hagen. Why didn't Annemarie contact Uta, I suggested, give her Ilse's regards, and ask if the actress or anybody she knew would be willing to provide an affidavit for me to come to the United States.

Evidently there was no response when Annemie wrote to the private address of Uta asking the actress to get in touch with her. Consequently, Annemarie begged Ilse in a letter to write personally to her old friend from Göttingen and explain to Uta that she seemed to be the only person with the right connections to be able to help me get to the States from London.

Apparently that did the trick. Within a few days after Uta received Ilse's plea the actress called Annemarie and invited my sister to visit her. During that visit it developed that Uta herself could not provide an affidavit for me, but that she knew somebody who might. His name was Adir and he lived at Number 1 Fifth Avenue in New York; evidently he was very rich and a social-minded person who liked to help less fortunate people. Annemarie was to drop me

a note in London to the effect that I should write a letter to Mr. Adir, stating my case honestly to him, and explain why I wanted to emigrate to the United States; also I should emphasize what my professional plans were and, most important, that I would never intend to be a financial burden to him.

After receiving Annemarie's letter, I typed out a one-page plea to Mr. Adir, meeting all the conditions that had been set and explaining that it had always been my greatest desire to live in the United States, which I had learned to love from movies and books, and that I was willing to work in any capacity and one day settle down somewhere in that huge country and support my future family there. To my surprise I received a most gracious letter from Mr. Adir within a matter of two weeks, in which he emphasized once more that he did not want to be financially responsible for me after my arrival in the States. Also that I should put this in writing and have it notarized before mailing it to him. In fact, he went so far as to stipulate that he did not want to have anything to do with me socially and that I should promise to him to always be a law-abiding immigrant.

Not only was this promise easy enough for me to put in writing and to keep, but it was something I personally wished for myself as well. I simply saw nothing sardonic in his demand.

Within a matter of weeks I could make an appointment at the U.S. consulate in London and soon thereafter received the much-yearned-for affidavit that spelled for me the equivalent of obtaining permission to immigrate permanently to the U.S.

The major obstacle for me in the late spring of 1947 turned out to be finding a boat that would take me to my new land of homogenized milk and honey: America.

Another hitch: The U.S. consulate wanted me to find a job in

the U.S. on my own as soon as I had settled down on the American continent. At the same time I was not to acquire even the promise of a firm commitment from somebody to employ me in the United States prior to my arrival there, so as not to deprive any unemployed American citizen of his or her job. A sort of Catch-22 predicament.

My primary purpose of entering America, I explained to the U.S.consulate in London, was to become a useful and law-abiding citizen of the U.S., and also be reunited with my darling sister Annemarie, a survivor of the Holocaust, who already lived in New York. Naturally I was willing to sign on the spot a questionnaire (and later on board of the vessel that took me to the United States) that I was not a polygamist, an anarchist, a Communist (I was not asked whether I was a Nazi sympathizer); I could furthermore provide the consulate with an iron-clad guarantee that I would find employment in Hollywood since I had had the good fortune of meeting and becoming friends in London with Josef Breen, the head of the Hollywood Motion Picture Association, which acted among other things as a kind of censorship bureau for American movies.

It was soon after the war that I had joined a London film club which frequently invited movie luminaries to give lectures to its members. One of these lecturers happened to be Mr.Breen, who, on a business trip to London, gave the club an interesting lowdown on how his organization saw to it that Hollywood films would never be sexually explicit in an offensive manner to any of the world's audiences, and it also proved to be his corporation's duty to seek out any transgression that might accidentally have slipped into the finished celluloid reels. Sometimes this rule went to ridiculous lengths in meeting the demands of such religious organizations as the Legion of Decency, which - to give a couple of examples - would

not even allow a scene in the bedroom of a married couple to show one large doublebed,even when unoccupied. The beds of husband and wife always had to be separated by a nighttable, or when the husband kissed his wife good-night in the bedroom, one of his legs always had to touch the floor while another Breen (formerly Hays) office law proclaimed that a screen kiss could not last longer than seven seconds.

Oddly enough, when Mr.Breen addressed my film club in London, he had quite a heated argument with another guest speaker, who just happened to be Britain's most famous documentary filmmaker at the time, Paul Rotha, on which occasion the latter complained about the length to which Hollywood stooped in order to placate the blue-nosed puritans everywhere.

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Nevertheless,even though agreeing with Paul Rotha,at that time I was virtually willing to sell my soul for a job in Hollywood;consequently I did approach Mr.Breen after his enlightening talk,telling him without blushing that I agreed with him wholeheartedly and that it had always been my wish to emigrate to the States. Would he help me find a job in Hollywood? He brushed back his thick mane of steel-gray hair and said that he'd try his best,at least whatever he could do,and when I approached him months later by mail at the Los Angeles Motion Picture Association office on Hollywood Boulevard,he remembered me but showed no sign of assisting me in any manner,shape or form since he claimed all of a sudden that he personally lacked any kind of influence over the powers-that-be,the studio heads.Fair enough! Except that all the studio heads trembled in his presence,as Paul Rotha had announced in his own speech to us youngsters.

Understandably,the American government did not want me to become a burden to the U.S. taxpayer and it turned out to be my sister's employer at the time,the Presbyterian Hospital in uptown New York,that finally promised to find employment for me on its kitchen staff,although a written promise to this effect was unacceptable since it might deprive an indigenous American of a job. Catch-22! Still,armed with such a verifiable oral promise, I was finally entitled to board a steamer willing to transport me via Sweden through the rough December seas to the Land of Opportunity as well as of Homogenized Milk and Honey.

Fortunately,I was still in time,on November 20,1947,to witness the royal procession near Buckingham Palace on the occasion of Princess Elizabeth's wedding to Lieutenant Philip Mountbatten. That very same evening Philip became Duke of Edinburgh.

What concerns my less glorified fate,the worst part of my long journey to America turned out to be the passage from England to Denmark (no direct trip from England to the U.S. would have been available to me for another six months.)The choppy seas,carrying the "Kronprince Frederik"

and me on board proved nothing less than a disaster. Every passenger, including me, threw up non-stop on the endlessly stormy North Sea until at long last we reached the secure haven of Copenhagen. Here a nighttrain took us via a ferry to the Swedish port of Göteborg.

It should come as no surprise that our empty stomachs cried out for food, but since we had arrived in Göteborg's port at three in the morning, the King Karl Hotel there refused to accept us at that unearthly hour and all of us passengers were stranded in the bitter-cold December night until an English-speaking cop directed us to the Hotel Eggers, where the kitchen, however, was closed for the night. But next morning we did have a sumptuous breakfast at the Palace Hotel and shortly afterwards - on November 28, 1947 - could board the Swedish-American liner "Drottningholm," that would take us to the United States.

I did share a cabin on that boat with a Norwegian professor of etymology and an Orthodox Jew who was a Hungarian carpetseller. Neither of them felt like having much social contact with me. For the former, I was too uneducated; for the latter not religious enough. But I did make friends with a lovely young Norwegian (unmarried) couple, Jan Harsen and Else Maria Stromdal, both of whom were my age and could have been discovered by any Hollywood movie scout: they were that good-looking. In fact, we proved to be inseparable on board and on one occasion simultaneously jumped up from our breakfast table one morning, leaped up the narrow staircase to the ship's deck and vomitted together overboard into the indifferent Atlantic Ocean.

Once in New York, where our vessel arrived on December 8, we took a taxi in the afternoon to Jan's and Else Maria's temporary overnight hotel, the King's Arms (we corres-

ponded for a few more months, after they had moved to Minnesota, but then our exchange of letters fizzled out, and that was over fifty years ago) and at 5 p.m. I proceeded to my sister's apartment at 63 West 100 Street in Manhattan.

I will never forget the three or four minute-long embrace in the peasoup-smelling hallway when we wept with joy in each others' arms that both of us had survived the ordeal of the Holocaust and the war and found each other unharmed again.

Hers was an immaculately kept two-and-a-half room apartment (with a covered bathtub in the kitchen and a communal toilet in the hallway), which she shared with her dear Holocaust-survivor girlfriend Ilse Lowenthal (a name Ilse changed after her U.S. naturalization on my suggestion to Ilse Low), and here I stayed with them for almost two weeks, getting to know New York and my two female companions since Annemie obviously had changed during the horrible Nazi period (but was still the sweet sister I had always loved), and on those two Sundays we took sightseeing trips via Red Apple bus tours and, most importantly, in the evenings I heard from Annemie about our family's daily experiences before the latter's deportation to the Nazi death camps from which they, tragically, never returned.

Naturally, Annemie and I made a point of it to visit the two people who had made it possible for me to come to the U.S. and join me once more with my dear sister.

First, there was actress Uta Hagen, whom we visited in her downtown house and who welcomed us most heartily, (being also a good friend of our cousin Ilse in Hamburg) and she told us proudly of her friendship with Paul Robeson, with whom she had starred on Broadway in "Othello." I thanked her profusely for her help in arranging for me to come to the U.S., and a day or so later

Annemie and I paid our respects to Mr. Adir at Number One Fifth Avenue for providing me so selflessly with that much-yearned-for affidavit so I could enter this country.

He proved to be an intensely serious, unsmiling man in his fifties, who had just gotten married to the woman he now introduced us to as Madame Majeska; evidently she worked as a book illustrator. Mr. Adir impressed upon me never to let him down or having me end up in trouble with the law or in financial difficulties, since he saw no reason why I, as a healthy strapping young man, should need anybody's assistance.

I gave him my word that I would not let him down; after all, I explained, I had managed to survive on my own in war-torn England since 1939 without anybody's financial help when I was still in my teens.

Somehow my positive attitude satisfied and impressed the two Adirs and, at that point only, Mrs. Adir asked us whether we'd like to have a cup of coffee, an offer we gratefully accepted. It proved to be the only time I ever came face to face with the Adirs and somehow I could sense that they were glad to bid good-bye to us. I even had the feeling that they did not much like the beautiful dark-blue sweater my great romance Sylvia Berliner back in London had knitted for me and which I could wear for about ten more years, but the way Mrs. Adir kept oggling it seemed to me at least to be more of a critical nature than a gesture of appreciation.

Even so, I will always be grateful to Mr. Adir for making it possible that I could enter the United States legally, rejoin my sister and start a new life here.

But then finally, in late December 1947, came the day when I'd set off with hopes of glory and achievement for America's Golden State: California.

From the outset, however, bad luck would hound me! In fact, throughout my entire half-year stay in Hollywood, misfortune seemed to be my parttime companion. Actually, I can almost say that mishaps pursued me relentlessly, starting the very day I arrived in the U.S. It happened to be in that very week that the world-famous

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Hollywood movie director Ernst Lubitsch died unexpectedly, I think of a heart attack. I had had a personal introduction to him from his best friend, the London-based Hungarian playwright Lajos Biro, who had sometimes invited me to his elegant house in London's Hampstead area. In fact, it was Lubitsch, who had directed Tallulah Bankhead a few years earlier in Biro's movie "Czarina."

So my introductory letter from Biro to Lubitsch was null and void, but I still had two other introductory aces in the hole from Biro: the director Fritz Lang and the Hollywood agent Paul Kohner, who, I was told by Biro, had also been a movie-agent back in pre-Hitler Berlin.

I remember walking for miles down Sunset Boulevard to reach the agent's spacious office after I had had to wait for about a month to even make an appointment with him. When I finally got to see Kohner, he asked me about my personal experiences in the film industry and I told him point-blank that I had none except for a few appearances in German movies as an extra before the Hitler regime took over and my brief training in directing under Leslie Howard. Kohner, however, was more interested in my professional movie career, which was non-existent in the strict sense of the word. The agent rose from his chair and told me at once that he had no intention of wasting any more time on somebody coming to see him under false pretenses. What false pretenses, I wanted to know. All I had done was to ask him, with the help of Lajos Biro's letter, whether he would be instrumental in helping me land a job in a Hollywood movie studio. Again he said that I was wasting his time and then dismissed me with a wave of the hand.

Like a beaten dog I withdrew from his office, not even summoning up enough courage to tell him how ungracious and unnnecessarily cruel he was to a young novice, who only asked if he

could direct me to somebody who might be able to get me a job. But evidently this was the way Hollywood liked to treat nobodys. These were the rich cats who could wield enormous power without the fear of being overthrown.

As it happened, I did bump into Kohner once more, about a month later, namely while sitting ~~for hours and hours~~ in the waitingroom outside the private office of Harry Cohn, the head of Columbia Studios. I had been biding my time there for a good two hours already when Kohner emerged from Cohn's office. Little did I realize at the time that movie stars Larry Parks ("The Jolson Story") and Rita Hayworth were still in Cohn's office. However, when Paul Kohner recognized me on his way out, he stopped short, frowning, and asked me what I was doing here. I told him I was waiting for Cohn to see me.

"Do you realize," he said, "that Larry Parks is in there right now pleading for a role in the movies? What makes you think the chief will get you a job at Columbia?" And he exited.

My heart, my entire being, turned to wax. I could not move and seemed to be paralyzed by his heartless but true words. Kohner's sadistic prediction filled my mind, my entire being, with fofeboding for two more hours in that brightly lit waitingroom where three secretaries kept on hitting the keys of their typewriters without so much as even a glance in my direction.

In those fateful hours all my dreams of making it in Hollywood, which had been my ambition since I first entered the movie studios in the late 1920s at Ufa in Berlin, collapsed, disintegrated, turned to ashes, evaporated, much like the World Trade Center buildings fifty-three years later. I had lost my appetite and had to go to the bathroom but was afraid to go in case Harry Cohn was ready to see me, but finally I did go and at long last - around eight o'clock --

I was ushered by Cohn's male assistant into the boss's huge private office, entering it psychologically defeated and thoroughly disillusioned.(See the 1948 chapter "Rita Hayworth's Defeat and Mine.")

Nothing seemed to work in my life. When meeting one rejection after another, I realized that not only my luck had run out but my savings,too.

I had to eat,pay for the rent and other basic incidentals. Sometimes I walked for miles down Santa Monica and Sunset Boulevards to save a dime on the L.A. buses and streetcars, but after a few weeks I simply ran out of money and as a last resort called Mr.Adir in New York to send me a few dollars. Over the distance of three thousand miles, you could sense the icy reception of this request / that I hated as much in communicating to him as he did in receiving it. But after a long ominous silence he promised to send me a check of a hundred dollars and demanded that I repay the full amount within the next ten months. I was most grateful to him for his generosity and kept my promise in repaying the debt by October that year. It also proved to be the only time in my life that I incurred a debt.

At least, when I finally received his loan, I made up my mind to look for a job in Los Angeles instead of running after a movie career. And at long last I did land a job as a dishwasher for a Beverly Hills catering establishment - - the Martha Smith Candy Company at 331 North Beverly Drive - - that served dishes, cutlery, even garden-party furniture and fully cooked meals to members of the movie industry.

Probably the most unforgettable experience I had in this connection was the occasion when the Martha Smith truck delivered a fully cooked meal for about twenty people to the house of Groucho Marx.

When the driver arrived at the comedian's estate and we unloaded the food and a complete service of dishes, tablecovers and cutlery, Groucho (who was being billed by us as Julius Marx) happened to be squatting in the yard outside the kitchen door, mending a punctured bicycle tire. Without his moustache and baggy pants I did not recognize him at first, especially since he was wearing a rather soiled pair of white pants and a torn, oil-stained T-shirt. And because of my unfamiliarity with his un-Groucho-like non-mustachioed face, I approached the man and advised him to put the inner pink tubing of the tire in a bucket of water to detect the resulting air bubbles, where the tire revealed a puncture. A few seconds later, Groucho emerged with a huge soup tureen full of water, slowly rolled the inner tubing through the water and in no time found the bubbles sprouting on the glistening inflated rubber tube. I helped him patch up the holes and he asked me where I came from. When I explained to him that I lived at North Vista in Beverly Hills, he shook his head and wanted to know where I was born. After I mentioned my city of birth, Berlin, he frowned at me and enquired whether I had come to conquer America since my Führer had obviously failed even to conquer all of Europe.

Only at this juncture did I recognize his voice and it occured to me that I was actually confronting the world-famous Groucho and that he was under the impression I had fought on Hitler's side. It was at this point that I enlightened him on the fate of my family in Nazi concentration camps and that I had personally "sat out" the war for the most part in London. In fact, I showed him the wound in the back of my left leg that had been caused by a Nazi V-1 pilotless plane in London on December 14, 1944 near High Holborn when its shrapnel struck and felled me.

In turn, he nodded in an un-characteristic,un-Groucho-like gesture of extreme seriousness, next got up,went into the kitchen and came out with one of the tureens we had supplied to him minutes earlier. Without further ado, he ladled some Brussell sprouts from it on two plates for both the driver and me and, after declining it at first, we wolfed down the delicacy in no time.

Out of nowhere he explained to us he regretted that his old friend Conrad Veidt had died soon after completing "Casablanca" in 1943 because Groucho felt Veidt would have enjoyed my company. (Veidt,who was not Jewish,refused to return to Nazi Germany after his 1932 emigration to Great Britain just before Adolf Hitler came to power, Groucho told us.)

One odd postscript: After I had arrived in the U.S., I made it a point to thank not only Mr. Adir, my sponsor, for providing me with an affidavit to enter the United States legally, but also to personally express my gratitude to the actress Uta Hagen for her effort in introducing me to Mr. Adir.

~~At that time, in Dec. 1947, Uta was all a-glow when she spoke to my sister Annemarie and me about her warm friendship with her former "Othello" co-star Paul Robeson.~~ Later, in the 1950s, I wrote to Uta, congratulating her on her stellar Broadway performances in Odets' "Country Girl" and Tennessee Williams' "A Streetcar Named Desire," and after that in Edward Albee's "Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?" I still have those wonderful heartfelt letters of hers (see chapter "Letters from the Stars and Other Mortals") and I also remember her most fondly when my sister and I sometimes visited her in the early 1950s in her Washington Square house and she'd disapprove of some juvenile activities of her and José Ferrer's daughter Letitia.

Decades later, some time in the 1970s, my boss at Sterling Publishing Company, David A. Boehm, who had become aware of the fact that Uta had been instrumental in helping me to get an affidavit to enter the U.S. and was now a major Broadway star and

acting teacher, asked me if I would get in touch with her to have her write a foreword to a British book about acting he wanted to publish in the U.S.

I sent the book to Uta, explaining Mr.Boehm's request, and wrote a letter, informing her at the same time about my sister's death, and to my shock received a reply from her that the English book was total rubbish (which may have been true and obviously was just that in her opinion) and that she had no idea who my sister and I were.

About a quarter of a century after that episode, in 1999, my cousin Ilse from Hamburg and my ex-wife Ursula were visiting New York and went to see two one-acters in which Uta Hagen happened to be starring on Broadway. They went backstage after the performance to congratulate Uta and had a friendly chat with her about old times (in Germany Ilse had been sharing with the future star, but Ilse and Ursula decided to return to Washington shortly after that meeting, which prevented my cousin from paying me a New York visit, even though I lived only half an hour's drive by cab from the Broadway theater. (I could not travel there, having been sick at the time.)

So much in my life had not panned out as I had hoped. I can almost say that this streak of bad luck started already on the Atlantic a day or two prior to my arrival to these shores while I was leaning over the vessel's railing in December 1947, gazing intently at the unruly ocean while a girl near me was wiping her vomit from the ship's deck with her bandanna.

On that first of my trans-Atlantic crossings I still owned my father's sapphire signet-ring into which the Kuttner-family crest had been engraved. He gave it to me as his most treasured possession the very last time I saw him alive on February 6,1939 on the balcony of his Kurfürstendamm apartment. I cherished it and wore it every day during my nine-years stay in England as a living reminder of my wonderful father. At that time the ring

was slightly too large for me and sometimes it tended to slip off my left ring-finger, but I could always retrieve it on those occasions. Nevertheless, fate would have it that this beautiful family ring, with which I had often sealed my correspondence in England by/first imprinting the ring on some soft hot sealing wax, actually slipped off my finger while I happened to be leaning over the balustrade of the trans-Atlantic liner to America, and disappeared to my horror/forever in the unruly roiling depths of the ocean. More than half a century later, I still mourn the loss of this priceless family crest. My only consolation: maybe ten billion years from now, when the Atlantic has evaporated under the burgeoning sun, the signet ring will still serve as a reminder to an uninhabited Mother Earth, that at one time the Kuttner clan had crossed this planet from continent to continent.

But life goes on, and already the year after my arrival in the States, in late 1948, I took my first Greyhound sightseeing bus trip to Washington, D.C., and as part of this travel package my bus-load of passengers was treated to a visit to the U.S. mint and the old FBI headquarter. In the latter structure our group passed through a long corridor and through a large open portal I managed to peer into a spacious office and to my surprise saw one of the most famous people in U.S. governmental history at the time - - the FBI's bulldoggish director J.Edgar Hoover. He was in the process of handing a sheet of paper to one of his lieutenants and a second later frowned disapprovingly at my kibbitzing in his doorway.The next moment he barked at me: "Shut that door!"

I did, as told, with a sense of obligatory trepidation, whispering a tremulous "Good-bye,sir," and obediently rushed after my sightseeing group.

Soon after my return from Washington, I decided on visiting the Paramount Theater on Times Square to see the stage show starring Benny Goodman with his orchestra. After lining up for about four hours, I finally made it in and distinctly remember people dancing in the aisles to his music, a spectacle that did not take place when another attraction on stage appeared totally drunk, the comedian Buddy Lester, who refused to get off the stage even when staff members tried to pull him into the wings and a fight ensued after he had snatched a trumpet from one of the members of the Goodman band and a cop had to drag him behind the screen. To the audience's astonishment, Lester raced once more across the stage while the credit titles were being shown for the main feature, Bob Hope's "Paleface," which turned out to be not half as funny as the preceding spectacle on stage.

Coming home from this extraordinary experience that night, I found a letter from an old Berlin schoolfriend of mine, a Dane, Bernd Danielsen, who wrote me that the former superintendent of our school there, Dr. Voelkle, for a short time during the war had actually served as a concentration camp commander, and that a fellow student of ours, Karl Theodor Hoffmann, had been a member of the SS and emigrated to Brazil while our gym teacher, Pape, who had a clubfoot, had been a Nazi Party spy.

A few weeks later, I attended the most beautiful organ recital of my life, displaying the artistry of Virgil Fox at the huge Riverside Cathedral organ, and the month after that I enjoyed the artistry of Danny Kaye on the stage of New York's Roxy Theater.

Those were the days!

RITA HAYWORTH'S DEFEAT AND MINE. (1948)

One of the last things I did before leaving England for the U.S. in November 1947 was to visit the Anglo-Hungarian playwright Lajos Biro ("Czarina" starring Tallulah Bankhead), who lived in the fashionable London suburb of Golders Green, and he was kind enough to write four letters of introduction for me to some of the Hollywood giants he knew: Ernst Lubitsch, Louis B.Mayer, Fritz Lang and Harry Cohn.

Naturally, with my luck, one of them, Ernst Lubitsch, would choose to die the week I arrived in the United States (December 8), but at least I still had three aces up my sleeve: Louis B. Mayer (head of MGM), Harry Cohn (boss of Columbia Studios) and the master director of suspence, Fritz Lang. As it happened, my father knew Fritz Lang already back in the early 1920s when he served as the medical doctor-in-residence at the then-world-famous Ufa movie studios in Neubabelsberg near Berlin.

Soon after my arrival in California, where I stayed in a sunny room rented out to me by Ms. Irma Held at Beverly Hills's 454 North Vista Avenue, next to a room occupied by the toothless, bad-tempered Rudolf Blumenthal, I called the offices of the three remaining movie moguls. Unfortunately, there was no welcoming mat out for me and I had to wait several weeks until these mighty men would deign to see me some time in January and February 1948.

To keep above water economically, I was forced to take on a job and to my horror discovered that it was nearly impossible to land anything worthwhile at that dire time in the movie industry since the studios everywhere had laid off literally thousands of workers due to the European market being shut down to Hollywood movies, because the impoverished continent as well as Great Britain could not afford to squander dollars on films when

they had barely enough to buy food with their dollar reserves from the States.

So here I was, desperately trying to find a job, any job, and after almost a month I did end up as a dishwasher with The Martha Smith Candy Company, which, as pointed out, was a cuisine establishment serving huge meals for parties given mostly by movie stars and producers.

Nevertheless, I still had my introduction to three of the movie moguls and always took a day off from work in order to finally come face to face with each of them, one at a time.

I also had made an appointment with the well-known scenarists' and actors' agent Paul Kohner, and after waiting in his office for several hours, he made short shrift of me and told me to find a job in New York and forget about Hollywood since he claimed he only handled established talent and no fakes like me. (As explained in the previous chapter, I met this disagreeable man once more a month later.)

His verdict, however, had a crushing effect on me, but I refused to give up, and my second appointment happened to be only a few days away, a four-p.m.-meeting with Harry Cohn, the head of Columbia.

Oddly enough, when I explained to one of the three busy secretaries outside Cohn's office, after waiting for a full hour, that I had an appointment for 4 p.m., and there was nobody else to see Mr. Cohn at the time, I was simply told to be patient and continue waiting.

Again I settled down with my letter of introduction from Mr. Biro and suddenly heard some excited voices from the room next door. Somehow one of these voices appeared awfully to be familiar to me, but I simply could not place it, hard as I tried to, and as the afternoon dragged on and on the male voices in the abutting office became increasingly strident and excited until a sort of shouting match ensued. None of this seemed to faze the secretaries who kept on hitting the typewriter keys, but finally after another hour or so one of

men stormed out of that office and to my surprise the voice I could not quite place fell into place: it belonged to the actor Larry Parks, who had made a name for himself as the star of "The Jolson Story," the glamorized/film-bio based on Al Jolson's life. He seemed incredibly angry as he strode past me out of the waitingroom and I got up to make my entrance into the sanctum sanctorum of Mr. Cohn's office. However, a man in his late thirties, a Mr. Graf, who appeared to me to be the personification of a flunky, held me back and told me to be a bit more patient since Mr. Cohn still had another person in his office, but that it would be my turn right after her.

Yes, it was a "her" all right, but again I could not place the voice to the face, although that voice also proved to me to be familiar. Again, the exchange of views and opinions next door grew increasingly agitated, even angry, although the words themselves now were drowned out for the most part by somebody playing a piano in Mr.Cohn's office and by the three typewriters in the waitingroom.

To my horror I realized that the hour of my appointment, in fact, the hours, ticked away relentlessly. Five o'clock turned to six o'clock, and finally I had to go to the bathroom, hoping that my appointment with Mr.Cohn would not be missed by me due to the call of nature. Still, on my return from the bathroom, the same two voices next door were still going at each other hammer and tongs.

Again I asked one of the visibly oblivious secretaries how much longer I would have to wait since my appointment was for 4 p.m. and it was already seven in the evening. I was told that I'd be next, which could mean in the next minute or in five more hours. And when I heard the male voice next door shouting: "You're

wrong,Rita," it all fell into place. The woman next door was none other than Rita Hayworth, one of the world's most glamorous movie stars. There appeared to be none of the oomph and glamor when I listened to the two people shouting at each other, but finally the inevitable did happen: the woman, Rita Hayworth, the divine,sexy, world-famous Rita Hayworth, started to cry, to weep bitterly, virtually to sob heartrandingly,pleading for something, not for more money, but for a role different from the one Harry Cohn wanted her to star in. I should have such luck, I thought. But the tug of war next door had turned into the mogul's favor, into battle-fatigue suffered by the movie star who all men dreamed of conquering but never could, except for Mr. Cohn. It was a drag-out behind-the-scenes fight that no Hedda Hopper or Louella Parsons would ever get wind of and plaster under a Hearst-paper headline. And it made me feel sick to my stomach, queasy to the nth degree. If Cohn could humiliate one of the world's most glamorous and popular movie queens,what chance did I stand as a nobody pleading for a thirty-dollar-a-week job, willing to do anything, even to sweep the studio floors?

My heart and will to fight, to stand up to this Titan of the movie world, collapsed there and then and sank to rock-bottom, like Ms. Hayworth's tears.

And then finally, around eight p.m., the argument next door came to a close and a few seconds later footsteps approached the inner sanctorum's open door and the film diva emerged. For the life of me I can't remember what she wore, except that it was a beautifully tailored suit. She was dabbing at her eyes, her tense pale face, which happened to be streaked by zebra-like mascara lines, and she offered a pinched little smile of embarrassment to the three busy secretaries. Only then did she become aware

of my presence and stopped short, shocked, plainly bewildered by a young man in his mid-twenties having eavesdropped and witnessed the battlescene next door, not sure whether I would report any of it to one of those powerful gossip columnists,like Hopper and Parsons, who'd give their eyeteeth to report this defeat of a major movie star to their millions of readers, or whether I'd keep mum.

Ms. Hayworth bit her lips, frowned at me, then made a hurried unglamorous exit, no doubt to her majestic mansion and swimmingpool.

But now it was my turn to be humiliated and I braced myself for the onslaught of the century. I consoled myself boyishly, thinking of Hitler failing to defeat me, so why should I quake in my boots in front of Harry Cohn, who rarely made the news?

Even so, I still had to wait another quater hour or so before Mr. Cohn's pale,male flunkey emerged from the executive suite and asked me to follow him. By that time I had made up my mind not to be flustered by the Führer of North Gower Street, where Columbia Studios were located, knowing fully well I would not be hired in any capacity by him. So what did I have to lose except a few more minutes before dinner!

It turned out to be a spacious office, boasting a large grand on the right (the pianist had vanished by now), a couple of long tan leather sofas on the left and a huge desk at the other end of that mammoth workplace. And behind that desk sat the boss of one of Hollywood's biggest studios,Harry Cohn. But this desk was not strewn with scripts,correspondence or papers: instead Cohn confronted a big plate filled with nothing but a mountain of green peas, which he consumed, one at a time, by impaling each pea on the tip of a knife and then depositing it in his mouth before repeating the same routine with the next vitimized

pea. He did not wear a jacket but a shirt sporting a bow tie while behind him a man, either a barber in his white smock or another kind of toady, was busy massaging the bald pate of Cohn's head.

I approached his desk and extended my arm to shake his hand, but he probably was too hungry to consider interrupting stuffing his mouth with peas or did not deem it necessary to touch the mortal flesh of a nobody.

I had the letter of Lajos Biro in my left and handed it to him. He hardly glanced at it and asked me immediately if I was after a job in his studio. I answered in the affirmative and this answer seemed to affect him like a red cloth being waved in front of an angry bull.

He pushed the plate of peas aside, gestured to his barber to forget about his head for a minute, and then started to dress me down , calling me a nobody who had not even made a name for himself in European cinema, so why did I think I deserved a job in one of the world's greatest movie studios?

I told him I'd be willing to work as an electrician or even sweep the studio floors, but I'd been in love with the movies my whole life and would try anything to break into the world of films, regardless of salary, even twenty dollars a week would let me survive in a room with two meals a day.

Cohn stared at me as I were a complete idiot (and so did the barber), then gave me to understand that he had heard this sob-story for twenty long years already and unless I had made a name for myself in anything, writing,acting,editing,directing,composing, there'd be no place for me in Hollywood. I was wasting his time and should go back to my parents and maybe they could straighten me out a bit.

This time he had unknowingly touched a raw nerve,where it hurt most. Simply put: he had mentioned my parents who had perished in the Holocaust just about three years earlier, and it enraged, infuriated me that this son of a bitch, who had never even seen a real bomb drop, except in a newsreel, and who had never had to hide from the Gestapo, should bring up my past, my family, in such contemptuous terms.

I had nothing to lose. I knew then and there I'd never land a job at Columbia and my hair-trigger temper flared up in a white sheet of hatred and got the better of me.

I got up from my deep armchair in which I had been sitting so low that the studio chief literally and psychologically towered over me behind his huge desk - - probably a deliberately designed interior-decorated devise to instill a feeling of inferiority and defensiveness in anybody facing the supreme boss in his gargantuan office. I stepped fofward, grabbed the edge of his desk and leaned halfway forward across it, then screamed at him that my parents had been murdered in a Nazi gas chamber while he was sitting in the comfort of the California sun getting a head massage and shovelling peas into his fat mouth.

I became so aggravated yelling at him that I proceeded to circle the desk,stepping behind it,where he was sitting,which probably no other mortal had dared to do, and then pulled up the trousers of my left leg to show him where a bomb splinter from one of Hitler's V-1 bombs had struck me in London on December 14, 1944, and then I lost my temper completely and screamed that his movie "Tonight and Every Night" based on life in London's Windmill Theater during the war was howled off-screen when it was shown in the British capital, because airraids were not as cozy as his studio had made them out to be five thousand miles

away in the L.A. sun, and if he thought I'd play a Jew to his impersonation of Hitler I could tell him right here and now that Harry Cohn would be forgotten when even super-bastards like Hitler and Stalin would be discussed in every schoolroom.

Cohn stared at me as though seeing a ghost. He bunched his fists and for a flash of a second I realized that I had attracted quite an audience: the barber and Cohn's flunkie as well as the three secretaries who had entered the boss's office, drawn to it by my temperamental outburst. Probably no studio chief had been demeaned like this since somebody had planted the first movie camera in Hollywood forty years earlier.

Harry Cohn most likely realized that I was in such a state of excitement and boundless fury that I was ready to attack him at the flightest provocation from him. So far nobody had come to his aid and he picked up the pea-knife that he had momentarily dropped during my fit.

He shoved the plate of peas aside and quietly asked me where my parents had been killed by the Nazis. I told him, my mother in Auschwitz and my father in Theresienstadt, according to the International Tracing Service. Much calmer already,he next wanted to know how I had survived the war. Again I brought him up to date and then dropped something akin to a bombshell when I elaborated that my father had been the in-charge medical doctor at Germany's Ufa film studios, where I had been picked up off the floor at the age of ten by none other than Hitler himself. All this was filmed and shown in newsreels in German cinemas in 1933, just about the time he himself had made "It Happened One Night."

Cohn stared at me incredulously and asked me about a dozen additional questions about Hitler. He was fascinated by him as a man wielding incredible power, and only after he and I had quietened down a bit,he got up,shook my hand and said how sorry he was,

that he could not help me on this occasion, then ushered me out of his office, past his flabberghasted employees, and recommended that I return to my sister Annemarie in New York and try to make a name for myself there, maybe as a writer. Once I had written a fictional bestseller, I should get in touch with him and he'd see to it that Columbia would buy the book for the screen.

It so happened that one of my books really did become a bestseller, my novel "The Man Who Lost Everything," but only after it had been bought for translation by the Spanish paperback publisher Planeta in 1976. By that time, however, Harry Cohn had been dead already for eighteen long years.

EMBARRASSING FRITZ AND FRED IN HOLLYWOOD. (1948)

One of the written introductions I had from the English-Hungarian playwright Lajos Biro ("Czarina") before leaving London for Hollywood in November 1947 was to the formerly Austrian, now naturalized American, Fritz Lang, who could truly be called one of the immortal movie directors from 1919 to 1960, although, in all fairness, it must be admitted that his work in the last half dozen years of his life behind the cameras was quite inferior to the first thirty-five years as a film director. But at the time, his name on a movie credit scroll, in a review of/on a poster, became a sure thing to sell extra tickets. In fact, one of my all-time favorite movies to this day still is his "Woman in the Window," starring Joan Bennet and Edward G. Robinson (1944).

But there happened to be another plus-side as far as pinning my hopes on Fritz Lang was concerned. My father, Dr.Paul Kuttner(Sr.), was the first medical doctor-in-residence at Germany's largest pre-World War II movie studio, Ufa, at Neubabelsberg near Berlin,with him serving there from 1920-1933. Actually, Ufa had started out near the Berlin airfield at Tempelhof even before the Deutsche Bioscop Company merged with the Decla Studio into the enlarged Neubabelsberg facility,but this in turn changed into Ufa around the end of World War I,in late 1917.

Probably the main reason my father was selected to become the medical doctor-in-residence there could be attributed to his good friend Erich Pommer, who turned out to become one of the heads at Ufa and whose life my father had saved during World War I in his capacity as a medical doctor("Oberstabsarzt") attached to a German division.

What I appreciated most of all as a youngster was that my father frequently took me along to the studio during my vacations and there I was fascinated by the hustle and bustle of performers and crews during the silent film era as well as the early sound period.

Sometimes my father was also called for emergency situations to other studios in the Berlin area and this in turn gave me the opportunity to meet some of the stellar movie personalities of the time, a few of which later made names for themselves, after sound was introduced, in the Hollywood arena, such as Conrad Veidt, Emil Jannings, Fritz Lang, Peter Lorre, Felix Bressart, and then there were lesser luminaries, whose fame did not expand much beyond the German-language movie field, such as Hans Albers, Jenny Jugo, Heinz Rühmann, Paul Hörbiger, Brigitte Helm, Lil Dagover, Gustav Fröhlich, Marianne Hoppe, Gustav Gründgens, Willy Fritsch, Lillian Harvey, Fritz Rasp and Renate Müller.

All of them proved to be charming and extraordinarily nice to me. I first met them through my father when I was four or five years old and they always spoiled me with Sarotti milk chcolate bars, which had the unwanted effect of preventing me from showing much interest or appetite for healthier nourishment, much to the displeasure of my parents.

The only woman that stands out in my mind at the time as a person I disliked intensely, even at that early age, was the wife of director Fritz Lang, Thea von Harbou, who also happened to be Germany's most famous and talented screenwriter. She was an otherwise non-descript woman, who liked to dress in men's suits, shirts and ties. Among her many artistic successes were the world-famous "M", which made Peter Lorre a household name, "Dr. Mabuse" and the earlier silent film classic "Metropolis," starring Brigitte Helm and Gustav Fröhlich. She became an outspoken Nazi later but claimed after the war, like millions of other Germans, not to have felt any animosity toward the Jews.

It was while she was sharpening a pencil with a pen-knife one day in 1929, when I was seven years old, that she cut herself and

my father was summoned and had to minister to her minor wound. He asked me to hold Ms. von Harbou's hand steady so he could wrap some bandaid around her finger after cleaning it up with some sort of hydrogen peroxide solution.

However, the poisonous looks she gave me, holding her finger, has never deserted my memory even seventy-odd years later. All this occurred on the set of "Die Frau im Mond" (The Woman on the Moon), but it happened to be an incident that came in handy about half a century later - - 49 years to be exact - - when I paid my respects to Fritz Lang at Hollywood's Universal Studios, where he had an office early in 1948 and was in the process of polishing some future script.

I could not have arrived on the Universal lot to meet Lang at a worse time. His company - Diana Productions (soon to be dissolved)/Universal - not only had just suffered a calamitous setback in January 1948 with his film "Secret Beyond the Door," starring Joan Bennett and the English actor Michael Redgrave, but nationwide it gave Lang some of the worst reviews he had ever received for any movie during his long career and obviously it showed in the abysmal business at the box office. All this, just before I met him some time in February 1948.

Even waiting for a good hour or so in his office building, I could sense the patently obvious doom among the staff. Personally I had not read the reviews of that film at the time, having been preoccupied with my own personal attempts to stay above water in an industry that was struggling to remain alive without much of a European market that needed to spend its scarce dollar reserves in the dire postwar period on victuals rather than on movies.

The day before I was to meet Fritz Lang, I paid a hasty visit to the Hollywood Actor's Studio (not related to its New York counterpart) and managed not only to interview and be photographed

with a few of the performers there, mostly supporting screen players of the 1930s and 1940s, such as Roman Bohnen and Art Smith, but while actually drying my sweaty body (there was hardly any air-conditioning at the time) with somebody's towel in the large communal dressingroom, I did hear a girlish giggle behind the man-high partition of my vestibule. My curiosity aroused, I peeked around the corner to investigate the source of this merriment and came face to face with a scantily dressed young blonde in the amorous embrace of none other than Anthony Quinn, whose muscular torso was equally exposed.

Shocked and angered by my unwanted curiosity, he barked at me: "Get out, damn you!", which I did in something approaching panic and a mumbled apology.

But the following day, I did get to see the Austro-American Master of Suspense and was received by him graciously as well as in good spirits despite his artistic setback, and of course he was armed with his inimitable monocle.

It proved hopeless to think even of being hired by him or his company at this most inappropriate of times, he told me right away, and Lang himself couldn't even make a movie for another two years, and that movie, to boot, in one of the least esteemed Hollywood studios, namely at Republic, which was known in film circles as a potboiler factory, turning out mostly some cheap Westerns or 18th century period pictures.

Nevertheless, we had an animated conversation about old times and when Lang asked me about my father, who had treated him for some minor ailments in a Berlin movie studio, I informed the director that he had been killed in the Theresienstadt concentration camp. Lang was truly shocked and immediately rose from his chair and squeezed my shoulder in a gesture of sincere compassion and

sympathy. Within a second he asked me to join him in the studio commissary for a bite to eat. It happened to be lunchtime anyway, so I accepted his offer most gratefully.

I do recall that on the way to the restaurant we came across a retinue of people walking in the direction of a large studio building. In the center of that small crowd was the fine movie dancer and actor Donald O'Connor, with one of his arms in a sling, and somehow this sudden unexpected appearance triggered something in me, prompting me to cry out: "Hi, Donald, how's the arm coming along?" To my surprise, the dancer (probably the finest dancer in movie history except for Astaire and Kelly) waved to me with his good arm, calling back: "Much better. Thanks, buddy."

Lang asked me how well I knew O'Connor and when I told him I had never met him before, he burst into an uproarious spasm of laughter and impulsively pinched my shoulder again.

We entered the commissary, which to my way of thinking resembled a glorified Horn & Hardart cafeteria. But the food turned out to be amazingly good as was our conversation about the old German movie industry. It was on that occasion that I brought up the long-ago incident with Lang's ex-wife Thea von Harbou when my father had ministered to her and bandaged a finger she had cut with her pen-knife.

Lang slapped his thigh in amusement and claimed that this was the first time in about twenty years he had been reminded of that occasion. But he remembered it well. Evidently his former wife had continued to write movies for the Nazis, even during the war, and was imprisoned by the Allies for almost a year during the occupation because she never bothered to recant her sympathy for the Hitler regime, although she also insisted on never having harbored any ill-

feeling toward the Jews and at one time even had had a Jewish secretary - - a rather lame alibi of innocence as far as the Allied authorities were concerned.

Of course, Lang had long been divorced from Thea von Harbou, and it happened to be an open secret at the time of my meeting him that he was having an affair with one of Hollywood's leading movie stars: Joan Bennett.

Still, we continued to talk about prewar-movie events, although he had already prepared me before lunch that he would not be able to help me finding a job in Hollywood, not even in his own company, as it probably would not manage to survive too long in Hollywood's cut-throat business history.

While we continued to exchange reminiscences and had our meal (to my surprise, he removed the ever-present monocle from his left eye while eating), I did become aware of some commotion when the table next to ours became occupied by a trio of diners. At first, I paid no attention to these newly arrived customers, but then my mind was briefly diverted to our neighbors when their hearty conversation frequently ended in gales of laughter. It was on one of those merry occasions that I realized that one of those three diners happened to be one of the world's finest and most famous longtime actors of stage and screen: Frederic March. He had already made a name for himself in the silent movie days and was still on top of the heap twenty years later. Dignified, good-looking, always impressive as a performer, he had no difficulty finding movie roles in all the major studios.

But while Lang and I continued to discuss the golden days of the pre-Nazi German film era, all of a sudden my attention was drawn again to the neighboring table where March was in the process of extinguishing a cigarette he had been smoking, actually putting

it out in a big pile of mashed potatoes on his plate.

It must be remembered that I had just arrived from an impoverished and exhausted post-World-War-II England where virtually every food item was still being rationed, and now seeing this wasteful and willful disregard of good healthy food being destroyed with total disregard and indifference by a burning cigarette or rather by a fatcat American movie star, ignited my short temper and in a flash I leaped from my chair, strode toward Mr. March's diningtable, and in the most puerile scathing tirade I started to berate the world-famous actor that it was a disgrace to destroy perfectly good food with a burning cigarette while millions of Europeans and Asians were starving and would have given their eyeteeth to eat just a morsel,a single bite of his heap of mashed potatoes (that also happened to be swimming in a pool of molten butter). Besides, hard as it was for me to say so, I considered it a disgrace that as well-known a motion picture actor as Frederic March would stoop so low as to deliberately destroy good food and not even feel the slightest twinge of shame at this disgraceful act while millions of people were scraping the bottom of garbage cans to retrieve an ounce or two of some nourishment.

Everywhere in the diningroom conversation had ground to a halt, a total dead-stop, as probably a hundred eyes stared unbelievingly at this weird,unreal scene. A complete nobody, a total unknown, confronting in the most acrimonious,callous terms one of the world's most celebrated and respected movie stars! This was not a matter of facing a film actor and demanding to know why he was having an affair with somebody's wife, but just an explanation a total unknown demanded to know about the future fate of a few forkfuls of mashed potatoes.

Mr. March stared at me as though seeing a ghost. He pushed the

plate from him and his two table companions gaped at me open-mouthed, obviously totally at a loss on how to react to such an uncalled-for situation. Then they stared, like March himself, for some sort of an explanation at Fritz Lang, hoping that the Master of Suspense would somehow manage to solve this unwritten mystery for them. Probably no mortal of my low stature, or for that matter noone in the movie industry had ever addressed a world-famous, celebrated, award-winning star in public in such caustic fashion. It goes without saying that not even a response for this outburst had ever been contemplated or written down in a scenario.

Oddly enough, it turned out to be Fritz Lang himself, who came to everybody's rescue. He rose from his chair and approached the distinguished actor, then profusely apologized to him for this uncalled-for behavior on my part. In his deep rumbling accented voice, Lang explained to March that I had just arrived from Europe, from impoverished England to be more precise, which was undergoing the aches and pains of the immediate post-war era with all its accompanying food shortages, but even more important, Lang expressed his hope that Mr. March would understand and forgive the short-tempered outburst of a young man who had been frustrated by one disappointment after another since arriving in Hollywood, trying to find some employment in a studio; unfortunately all to no avail.

Somehow Lang had managed the impossible; he had broken the ice, defused a simmering, loaded situation. The movie star rose from his chair and to my embarrassment grabbed my right hand, pumping it in a truly magnanimous heartfelt gesture, explaining that he had never before considered looking upon food as something that could result in a shortage of it, and that he would remember never again to extinguish a cigarette in it.

I mumbled something about hoping he'd accept my apologies for my intemperate behavior, then thanked him for his goodnatured apology

in the face of my loutish little tantrum.

Frederic March nodded, bestowing on me one of his gentlemanly smiles and sat down, watching Lang and me making our silent exit from the studio commissary.

However, this proved to be far from being the end of the story.

Very much as in a Lang movie, this occurrence developed into a time-changing coda. Because once Lang and I had returned to his office, his magnanimous behavior changed drastically.

He tore into me with all the Hunnish might at his disposal. He dressed me down in a shrill voice, and with good reason, for embarrassing him in front of one of the world's greatest movie stars over some trifle that was none of my business, and that if my father was still around he'd have given me the sound thrashing I clearly deserved, and if it were up to Lang himself he would have liked nothing better than to banish me forever from Hollywood.

I had never seen a face drain of blood as dramatically as Lang's did at this juncture. His jowels turned gray and were acquiver with the unspeakable excitement of his uncontrollable fury.

I too felt the blood drain from my face and my heartbeat grew increasingly berserk, pounding my ribcage as if it was trying to burst out of its confines. But I could not utter a single word of defense because none would have done a bit of good in explaining my behavior to him. To apologize for the damage that had been done would have been futile.

Instead, to my everlasting disgrace, tears of utter helplessness, of seeing my hopes of conquering Hollywood utterly crushed, evaporating before my very eyes by this unforeseen disaster, coursed down my cheeks unabashedly.

Lang somehow must have sensed my defeat, my silent, teary-eyed desolation, and he cut off his tirade of abuse in midstream and

stared at me. To my surprise, he glanced over my shoulder and made a dismissive movement with his hands. I looked around and saw members of his staff peek through the crack of the partly open door, which led to his secretaries' office: the girls immediately withdrew and closed the door quietly, leaving me again alone with the trembling Master of Suspense.

He walked back to the armchair behind his desk and flopped into it, exhausted and shaking all over, clasping the corners of his desk to steady his nerves. I stood in the middle of the office, in tears, heartbroken, knowing fully well that my dreams of finding a career in Hollywood had been dashed, turning into nothing more solid than a heap of ashes.

We faced each other silently for a minute or so and finally Lang fidgeted with a drawer in his desk and came up with a box of Whitman's Assorted Chocolates. He removed the cellophane wrapping, still shaking, opened the box and selected a piece for himself that he chewed pensively. Somehow the sweet praline must have soothed his frayed nerves because after a little while already he appeared to be much calmer. The tremor in his hands ceased altogether and he seemed to enjoy the sweetness of the candy he was chewing with almost voluptuous satisfaction. A tiny smile flickered across his tense features as he carefully closed the box, and to my utter astonishment he now offered it to me.

In a trembling voice I told him that I did not want to deprive him of something that obviously had a healing and soothing effect on him, but he insisted that I take it. I did not want to again hurt his feelings and gratefully accepted it.

Immediately he rose from his chair and ushered me to the door, one of his arms wrapped around my shoulders. Again he advised that I look for something more appropriate, preferrably near my sister Annemarie in New York because the chances of finding employment there

were infinitely greater than in Hollywood.

It wasn't so much that I took the advice to heart as that economic necessity compelled me to look for greener pastures elsewhere and since my wonderful sister lived in New York I finally decided to return to her newly adopted city. Within twenty-four hours of my arrival in this, the most metropolitan city in the world, I found a job with a Protestant organization, Church World Service, (CWS), which was in the process of looking for social workers to to take care of Displaced Persons, who had started to arrive by the thousands every month from Europe and since I had been employed in London for a few years already as a social worker at Bloomsbury House to handle problem refugee cases and had a wonderful reference to this effect from the head of that English organization, Mrs. Hardisty, I was fortunate enough to be hired on the spot to make employment and housing arrangements for newly arriving DPs to the United States.

One small postscript here is in order, because it refers to a brief meeting with Frederic March several years later in New York, where he was appearing on Broadway with his wife, the magnificent stage actress Florence Eldridge, in Robert E.Sherwood's "Another Part of the Forest."

Since I had my press credentials on me from the English magazine "The London Week - What's On in London" and the London newspaper "News Chronicle" when seeing this minor play of Sherwood's, I had little difficulty in paying a visit backstage to March on a Saturday evening after one of his performances.

At first he seemed rather indifferent to my questioning him about his plans for the future, and Ms.Eldridge, his wife, did not relish the idea at all of being interviewed. Both of them were more interested in removing their minimal make-up and getting out of the theater.

The interview, it became obvious to me, was getting nowhere - - a discouraging occasion for any journalist who was trying his damndest to obtain a nugget of information that would make an interesting headline and catch the readers' attention.

Only at the end of the interview did it occur to me to bring up the fact that Mr. March and I had had a previous rather unpleasant encounter. March's famous brow knotted into a suspicious little frown as he studied me in the reflection of the bulb-framed mirror on his make-up table. He wanted to know what occasion I was referring to and it fell to me now to recount the story of the incident several years back in the studio commissary at Universal when he had extinguished a cigarette in his mashed potatoes and I had given him a rather juvenile tongue-lashing.

Again the stage star frowned at me in the reflection of his mirror, then threw back his head and burst into gales of uproarious laughter.

Sure, he remembered that event. He turned to his astonished wife and explained to her in the most minute detail the entire scene with Fritz Lang, then got up and shook my hand, asking me what I had been doing.

We exchanged each other's news, and I took the opportunity to apologize profusely for my boorish behavior at Universal years earlier, but March insisted that I had been entirely in my right to complain about his wasting the mashed potatoes, although he reminded me correctly that the kitchen personnel would have discarded the leftovers, even without his cigarette butt, in any case.

Of course, the actor was right, but he proved to be gracious enough to invite me and share some hamburgers and French fried, which a stagehand had brought in on half a dozen plastic plates for March and his wife.

In fact, Ms. Eldridge complained to me that her husband made it a rule of leaving half his meals on the plate, at home too; probably one of the reasons why this truly gentlemanly star displayed a perfect figure, even into his late seventies.

Unfortunately, nothing of my report about these two rather melodramatic meetings I've personally had with Frederic March ever found its way into my "London Week" column, because, as my editor, Maurice Speed, informed me by mail, it lacked rock-hard show business news value.

Even so, Fritz Lang and Frederic March will always be ensconced securely in one of the ventricles of my heart and my memory bank.

MAGNANIMITY AT MGM. (1948)

Even though I began to realize that I wouldn't be blessed by too much success in trying my luck at MGM, I made an appointment with the head honcho there, Louis B. Mayer, shortly after my failure to land a job at Columbia Studios.

With the Hollywood movie industry atill at a virtual standstill at that period due to the European market regretfully rejecting the import of U.S.movies because of the postwar shortage of dollars which were needed more urgently for food on the devastated and impoverished European continent, all the major and smaller film studios operated only at half-strength. The film executive buildings might as well have flown the Stars and Stripes at half-mast for the immediate postwar period.

I knew fully well that I had nothing to lose making my appearance at these studios, armed with my letters of introduction, one of which was actually addressed to MGM's head, Mr. Mayer -- a name that, in fact, graced the wreath half circling the roaring lion at the beginning of each MGM movie. Probably nobody in the entire motion-picture world was more feared and more powerful than this top executive who also pocketed the highest annual salary for years in the United States, more than $250,000, at a time when taxation was truly infinitesimal and a 20-room mansion cost less than eighty thousand dollars.

Oddly enough, I did not have to wait very long for this prearranged meeting with Mr. Mayer, but our encounter proved to be so brief, so non-descript and non-productive after he had read the Biro-letter of introduction to him that he dispensed of my person, my crushed hopes within a matter of minutes. This is not meant to imply that his behavior was in any way shrill or unkind in his dismissal of me, just that he simply could not hire anybody at that

economically disastrous time, and that was that. In fact, one of the most memorable items standing out in my mind relating to this brief encounter was Mr.Mayer's desk, which I recall as having been horseshoe-shaped, with an American flag in an umbrella-stand slightly to the left behind him.

But even though on that occasion I had no big dreams of success in persuading Mr. Mayer to hire me in any capacity of his own choosing, I still was crushed when he turned me down without any pretense of sympathy.

It proved to be a terrible blow to finally realize that I had crossed the Atlantic and the American continent, using up my life's savings (I was 25 years old at the time in 1948) and then being dismissed by a man, who I had hoped would be gracious and powerful enough to find a lowly job for me in his giant movie empire, but I was dismissed in a matter of minutes more as a nuisance speck of dust than as a human being, still mourning an exterminated family, yet dying to work in the world's movie capital. The movies depicting hopefuls getting a chance in playing bit parts in films and then being discovered by a director or another movie star - - well, they were just that - - stories born in the fertile minds of high-salaried scriptwriters, who had been Hollywood staples since the silent era.

Still, there he sat, the emperor of Hollywood, a former glove salesman, ready to look at yesterday's rushes and forgetting about the jerk,who had traveled six thousand miles for nothing.

And unsurprisingly, with a bit of Schadenfreude I read,three years later in the New York Times,that Mr.Mayer had been removed from MGM, and six years after that, death had claimed him.

But at the time of being physically dismissed by him, I left his office utterly beaten and despondent.My dreams again had been crushed. I simply roamed listlessly around the busy hustle-bustle of the MGM

lots until I reached one of those gigantic film studio buildings that kept flashing a red light outside its enormous sliding doors, warning passers-by not to try to enter the building since a scene was being shot indoors.

I had nothing to lose but some free time at the tailend of that futile afternoon and I waited for that red light to stop blinking,so that I could see for myself what kind of scene had actually been shot on Stage 5.

Finally the light stopped flashing and the three-story-high sliding doors opened, exposing the dark cavern of the film studio's interior. My plan had been to saunter in and take a good look at the fabricated fantasy world that would bamboozle and delight movie audiences eight or ten months later throughout the world.

I never managed more than a few steps inside when a couple of people slowly advanced in my direction, involved in a deep conversation. My heart stopped. Because that couple happened to be two of the most famous and popular movie stars in the world: Lana Turner and Spencer Tracy. For a moment I truly believed my heart had stopped beating, then skipped a couple of beats and shot a gallon of adrenaline into my blood stream. Whatever it was that possessed me and gave me the courage to advance on these two fabulous icons of the movie world, I can't tell to this day. Probably my hopeless case in Hollywood - - what did I have to lose but the clothes on my back? - - still, I approached them and bluntly introduced myself that I had just arrived from England and wanted to ask them only a couple of questions for my showbusiness magazine "What's On in London" since I had promised its editor to send him a few columns every month from the heart of Hollywood.

Tracy and Turner stopped in their tracks,feeling kind of betrayed at having been waylaid by a greenhorn and seeing their inti-

mate, most likely professional conversation, interrupted by an absolute nobody.

Lana Turner appeared to be more than a little bit miffed, with good reason, and immediately excused herself since, so she claimed, she had some other business to attend to. Both of them were not in any period costume or even facially made up for filming, so I had assumed they could spare some time with me. But Ms.Turner left us in a bit of a huff in her tight-fitting costume. The result: I was stranded with probably the most famous and popular movie star in the world:Spencer Tracy. Oddly enough, it was Tracy who melted the ice and made things easy for me when he asked how old I was and where I originally came from; obviously he had noticed the combination of my German and English accents.

I explained to him that I had spent the war years in England but was born in Germany, where my father had served as the medical doctor-in-residence at the world-renowned Ufa film studios. Evidently, this caught Tracy's full attention because he had become quite a connoisseur of the Nazi period since starring in one of the finest anti-Hitler movies of all time:"The Seventh Cross."

When I told him that I had been filmed with Hitler back in 1933 at the Ufa studios and that that accidental scene had made life easier for me in my Berlin school, he pulled me aside to a wooden bench outside the studio building and literally bombarded me with questions there about the Nazi period. He had never met anybody who had met Hitler personally and was anxious to know everything there was to know about him.

I explained to Tracy that not being an intimate of Hitler's circle, I could only speak for myself as having seen him a few times and that on one occasion I was caught in a stalled Berlin elevator with Göring.

We must have been talking in the sun on that bench for a good half hour or so when,all of a sudden,Lana Turner stood in front of us, demanding of me whether I had "cross-examined" Mr.Tracy enough now for a dozen of my showbusiness columns. I got up, as is my habit when a lady enters my presence, and explained to her how my/socalled interview with Mr.Tracy was proceeding when Tracy grabbed me by the wrist and pulled me back down on the bench next to him, telling Turner that I had met Hitler as a child at Ufa. When the glamorous movie star asked me where Ufa was located, Tracy burst into a lovely little chuckle, grabbed her by the wrist and forced her to sit down on the other side of him, asking me to explain to Ms.Turner what I had already told him. But before I had the chance to give her my rendition about my encounter with Hitler, she demanded to know whether I had been a Nazi.

It was at that point that I informed both of them that my entire family, except for my sister Annemarie,had been exterminated by the Nazis. This came as a shock to both stars,who had probably never come face to face with anybody who had been a victim of the Holocaust, and they did mumble something about being sorry, but Ms.Turner (whose father,she explained, had also been murdered), wanted to know how it came about that I met Hitler when my parents were Jewish and killed in a concentration camp. Again I went into detail and explained that my parents were considered to be Jewish under the 1935 Nuremberg race laws and consequently had been exterminated; also that the Auschwitz lists issued by the Nazis stated that my mother had been murdered in the last gassing operation in Auschwitz-Birkenau in November 1944, which was later confirmed in writing by the International Tracing Service in Arolsen near the Black Forest.

In the course of our conversation I brought up some of my other childhood experiences at Ufa, also/my encounter with Göring in a

Berlin hospital elevator, then later my friendship with Leslie Howard, who had been a close friend of the man largely responsible for my welfare in England during the war: Sir Eustace Pulbrook, the chairman of Lloyds of London, and my encounter with Fritz Lang and Frederic March just a few days earlier at Universal.

Oddly enough, it turned out to be Lana Turner, who at that point made the suggestion that, maybe one day, when I had assembled enough exciting material, my life's experiences, like the ones I had been telling them about, would prompt me to hunker down and write it all down and try to sell it as a book, an autobiography, to a publisher.

Yes, this glamorous popular, yet underrated, movie star made a prediction that I was prepared to fulfill and turn into reality well over half a century later. Both of these great screen performers have long since passed from this earthly scene, but the memory of them remains forever fresh in my mind.

And as an icing on the cake, Mr. Tracy asked if I was still interested in his autographed photo. Now, which mortal would decline such an honor?

(on the way there, we came across Red Skelton and Jimmy Durante)

As we proceeded to his studio office, he explained to me that he often wrote his autograph in long spindly letters and sometimes in a cramped fat writing style, the latter when he felt magnanimous and in a good mood. Strangely, he then added that he liked me for my spunk in overcoming all those odds, and if he himself seemed like a man without a care in the world, that was just a facade, because he had a child who was impaired (as he described it), but for the life of me I can't remember today whether this offspring of his happened to be born deaf or mute.

In his cramped private room, he pulled a close-up photo of himself out of a desk drawer and signed it "Never give up hope, Paul. S.T. 1948" and handed it to me. Of course, I was immensely moved

and grateful to this great actor for his magnanimous gesture, and as I got up to shake his hand, somebody knocked at the door. It was Lana Turner. She entered,all smiles, and gave me one of her own photos, autographed to me, a picture of herself, scantily dressed in a white fur, with a barely visible but extremely sexy little smile while reclining on a most inviting sumptuous bed.

Naturally it goes without saying that I still have both autographed photos and think back most fondly to this particular afternoon when my mind plays a flashback to these long-ago times of Hollywood's golden era.

As pleasant as this encounter turned out to be, I knew that - careerwise - my immediate future in Hollywood was as good as dead and that I'd better return to my sister in New York in order to make my living there. So, finally I bade goodbye to my compassionate landlady, Irma Held, to my recently acquired acquaintances as well as to Mulholland Drive, Sunset, Wilshire and Santa Monica Boulevard, (Grau)-Mann's Chinese Theater, and even to Hollywood's old Chateau Marmont hotel, where I sometimes cooled off in its dark lobby and saw a few supporting Hollywood actors who lived there and where, decades later, John Belushi died of an overdose.

WHY CHARLES LAUGHTON HATED ME...AT FIRST. (1948)

Why do I recall the two-minute unpleasantness in 1948 when I came face to face with one of the twentieth century's finest celluloid scenestealers?

It happened to be lunchtime in the early spring of that year while I was still hunting for a job out West, and I was about to pass the world-famous Brown Derby, the restaurant most frequented by movie folks at the time in L.A., when a heavy-set man stepped out of a taxi cab and sauntered, eyes aimed at the pavement, in the direction of the eating establishment. It would have been impossible not to recognize this internationally-known movie star, who had portrayed kings and hunchbacks, butlers and captains, and been a favorite throughout the world for almost twenty years already: Charles Laughton. Since he was not looking up, it was I who tried to get out of his way to avoid colliding with him, but somehow we could not prevent a harmless little collision that could be characterized really as merely brushing past each other.

I apologized immediately, becoming simultaneously aware that the star's attire seemed to be in an awful state of disarray while his tie and shirt appeared indeed quite stained.

Like a damn fool, after my apology I somehow could not help myself pointing impulsively out to this stellar character actor that he had some gravy stains on his lapels. After this gratuitous remark, he looked up at me with an unchacateristic scowl that could only be interpreted as loathsome and unforgiving. With good reason he now stared me down with: "Don't be impertinent, young man, and mind your own bloody business!"

"Anything the matter, Charles?" a familiar woman's voice rang out behind me. I turned around. It was his wife, Elsa Lanchester, who

had been paying the cabdriver and was now approaching us.

To realize that you are suddenly confronting two of filmdom's most admired and illustrious performers in a situation like mine can only be described as a personal disaster when acknowledging the fact that you had had the temerity to criticize the movie star's lack of cleanliness only seconds earlier, something that, indeed, was none of my business.

I smiled gamely at Ms. Lanchester and explained circuitously that I had just arrived from England (which was true) and that meeting this thespian couple would be a chapter of my life that I could tell my children and grandchildren about with the greatest of pride. I grabbed Mr. Laughton's hand and shook it firmly, mumbling that I was indeed terribly sorry if I had hurt his feelings.

Laughton immediately withdrew his cool flabby hand from mine and said that he could not detect an English accent in my apology. I explained in a few words that I was a refugee from Nazi Germany and had lived in London during part of the war. Ms. Lanchester asked me what I was doing in Hollywood, and when I explained that I hoped to find a job in a film studio, both of them chuckled in unison: "So are we!"

Naturally I had to grin at that, although I ventured to say that it was more likely they would end up with a job in the movies before I ever would. But even so, both of them had already come to my personal attention as a boy, first in a little-known film from England back in the mid-1930s titled "Rembrandt," which had first opened my eyes not only to their artistry but to the painter himself, and also that I loved Mr. Laughton's performance in "Ruggles of Red Gap," although it had not been synchronized in 1935 or even showed German subtitles, so that I didn't follow the

story at all but enjoyed his artistry nonetheless, just as I hated him as Captain Bligh in "Mutiny on the Bounty."

The actor again chuckled, having probably been pacified by my sincere praise of him by now, and gently pinched my cheek, claiming that there was indeed still some hope for me. Out of the blue, I retorted that he actually happened to be already the sixth Oscar-winner I had met in my life, and this remark of mine aroused his curiosity when he asked me who the five other Oscar recipients were. At that point his wife enquired for why I did not join them / lunch, but I did not conceal my state of poverty when I explained to them that I did not have enough money on me to pay for a meal at the rather exclusive Brown Derby and that I was not properly dressed to make my appearence there since I even lacked a tie for the occasion.

Laughton explained in a by-now jocular manner that I should not be a silly boy, that they were inviting me, and I gratefully accepted their kind impromptu hospitality. During the meal I let them know again that Mr. Laughton happened to be the sixth Academy Award winner I had met in my life, and their curiosity piqued, they asked for the second time / who the five other performers were. Oddly enough, I had met only one female Academy Award star, Vivien Leigh, but I did list for them the other five male actors: Spencer Tracy, who had cross-examined me about the German movie industry and the Hitler period after he had become fascinated in that period during the filming of "The Seventh Cross;" Frederic March, who had behaved like a true gentleman after I had stupidly castigated him for extinguishing his cigarette in some mashed potatoes; Gary Cooper, who had apologized for keeping me waiting squeezing oranges at midnight in Farmer's Market; Bing Crosby, who had taken a Sunday-morning stroll / in London's Hyde Park after the war and asked me for a match to light / his pipe while I was waiting for my girlfriend Sylvia;

and the very first Oscar winner ever for a lead performance in a Hollywood movie. I asked Laughton and Lanchester if they knew who I was talking about. They took a few wrong stabs and when I gave them a hint that he had been a star in Nazi Germany, they could not imagine that a Hollywood actor could be a movie star (they always referred to such people as filmstars), making his living under Hitler. When I told them that the answer was Emil Jannings, they still seemed perplexed, not realizing that he had won the first Oscar ever for his 1927 performance in "The Way of All Flesh."

Charles Laughton admitted that both he and his future wife, Elsa, were still acting in London on the stage at that time, but they did concede that Jannings was a brilliant film actor. In retrospect, I must say that both Jannings and Laughton did share certain histrionic exaggerations in their screen portrayals, but both of them, like March and Tracy, added something indefinable to their performances that in their life-long careers had hardly ever been equalled by other actors in the decades following their death. It was my good fortune to have met all four of them.

When the couple asked me about my own family after I had acquainted them of my father's employment at UFA in the early days of that German mega-movie company, Elsa Lanchester did not want me to continue talking about it since the recent newsreels of the concentration-camp victims had given her horrible nightmares, but it moved me no end, after I had told her about the fate of my parents, when she suddenly leaned across the dining table and kissed my forehead.

We sat there for another hour or so but finally parted outside the restaurant, wishing each other the best of luck. They made many more films after our meeting.

However, the only time I ever met a female (two-time) Oscar-winning star, Vivien Leigh, happened to be in London when I saw her in 1946 giving a brilliant stage performance as the leading lady in Thornton Wilder's "The Skin of Our Teeth." Like dozens of other theatergoers I had posted myself outside the stage entrance and waited there a good two hours before she emerged from the theater and literally rushed through the unruly throng of autograph-hunters, clamoring for her signature, and disappeared, pushing me aside with a fortissimo "No, no, no!", inside her waiting limousine.

Years before, in 1942, I had seen Ms. Leigh give a charming performance in London's Haymarket Theatre as the female lead in Shaw's "The Doctor's Dilemma." At that time, however, I had had no personal contact with her, but I do recall that an airraid siren had sounded during the play, which was not interrupted and did not miss a line or prompt a single member of the audience to flee for the safety of an ARP (Airraid Precaution) shelter, while, in due course, a few nearby explosions could be heard, shattering the comedy's Shavian dialogue.

NOEL COWARD'S FAVORITE STAR. (1948)

A serendipitous interview a few months after my arrival in Hollywood came to pass simply because I happened to walk by a small theater with a friend of mine - - a photographer whom I had been introduced to at a New Year's party (1947-48) in Larry Parks's Hollywood house - and to my surprise the star of the show in that theater happened to be a name of great appeal to British and American audiences at the time, but one that is unfortunately largely forgotten today since she preferred to devote her professional life more to acting on stage rather than to performing in front of the camera: Gertrude Lawrence.

But there was her name on the Hollywood theater marquee in bright lights, the star of two Noel Coward one-acters, and since I always carried my "London Week" press-pass around with me at the time, it proved amazingly easy for my photographer sidekick and me to gain access to the actress and musical comedy star.

It must be kept in mind that I had arrived from England two or three months earlier and still suffered from serious bouts of homesickness for the London, impoverished as it was, I loved and had just left behind. I also knew that Ms.Lawrence had been born there (actually on America's Independence Day,in 1898) and was renowned for performing many songs celebrating her native town.

Moreover, it just so happened that a week or so earlier I had interviewed Charles Laughton and his wife Elsa Lanchester at the Brown Derby and I immediately mentioned to Ms.Lawrence my being so fortunate as to actually meet three of the most celebrated British performers in Hollywood within a matter of a fortnight and how highly Mr.Laughton had spoken of Ms.Lawrence,

especially about the occasion they had acted together in Alexander Korda's brilliant English film "Rembrandt" in the mid-1930s.

That finally broke the ice. Suddenly the professional interview became a truly friendly chat and even though Ms.Lawrence did not relish the idea of being photographed by my companion while she was in the white towel she had wrapped around her head, sitting there at her make-up table in a long white dressing gown, she still was gracious enough to give him permission to take just two shots of her while she was being interviewed by me, and over half a century later I still treasure these long-ago photos of a show-business legend that only exists in encyclopedias today.

In fact, Ms. Lawrence appeared to be so unpretentiously interested in my life in London, especially during World War II, and the Shaftesbury Avenue shows there during the Blitz, that it turned out to be her who was interviewing me about my experiences in Wartime London rather than the other way around.

And yet, she did reveal how proud she still was that her friend Noel Coward had actually written one of his best-known plays just for her - "Private Lives" - and that he also wrote, with her in mind, "Tonight at 8:30" and "Susan and God."

When I told her that I had seen Moss Hart's "Lady in the Dark" in the movies but unfortunately had missed her as the lead in the early 1940s in that musical on Broadway since I had lived in London at the time, she still appeared a bit miffed seven years later that she had not been selected to play the premier role in that film after being responsible for such a huge success as its star on stage. (Ginger Rogers portrayed her part in the film.)

She mentioned, however, that she was planning on returning to the New York stage in the not too distant future but was still waiting for the right vehicle for her. (Of course, later in

1951, she garnered rave reviews as the lead - opposite Yul Brynner - on Broadway in "The King and I.")

A week after my interview, I did send her copies of the two photos that had been taken of us but never received a reply from her. Nevertheless, during the interview she did thank me for taking her out of the doldrums that she had been in half an hour earlier, something she attributed to having broken one of her long fingernails. Somebody knocked at her door: a delivery boy bringing her some hot tea and dry toast, which she confessed she preferred having by herself since it regained the strength she had expended during the matinee. We excused ourselves, realizing how fortunate we had been in interviewing her without any formality or advance notice.

Four years passed, and in early 1952 I wrote to her that I'd like to make an appointment with her while she happened to be the very first star of the musical that can be considered one of the finest Broadway shows ever: "The King and I."

Months passed, and then finally, in late spring, I received a telephone call from Ms. Lawrence's press secretary that she did indeed remember me . . from our friendly chat in Los Angeles, but she truly felt so lousy and had not been well for quite some time - therefore the delay in answering my request for an interview - that she'd prefer if I contact her again later that year; she had the greatest confidence, anyway, that the musical would run forever, judging by the advance sales at her theater, and that she'd be glad to have me visit her then.

I was convinced that this message amounted to nothing less than a turn-down - she simply wasn't interested in an interview - so it goes without saying what a dreadful shock it was to me - and all theatergoers - when that same year, in September 1952, I read

her totally unexpected obituary in the New York Times at the height of her fame. Gertrude Lawrence seemed to have lasted forever, but when she so suddenly passed away she was only fifty-four years old. What I had considered a brush-off, actually was the beginning of a dreaded cancer.

SHOCKED AT CONEY ISLAND. (1948)

For years I had seen movies during the war that had Coney Island as a backdrop, and even while I was still in England I made up my mind to visit that world-famous landmark the first summer I'd reside in New York.

1948 just happened to have one of the hottest and most humid summers on record and in order to cool off I spent most of my freetime after work at the air-conditioned Bickford diner on Broadway and 112 Street, one block from where I first lived in a boiling-hot tiny room that had not been blessed yet with the miracle of air-conditioning, but for that matter neither had my place of employment, although a few movie houses already were blessed with this luxury and I could refresh myself there at night, watching inconsequential double-features.

Therefore I considered it an absolute Must to pay at least one visit to and refresh my sweaty body at the most famous beach in the world: Coney Island.

The subway trip there on Sunday took a good hour-and-a-half from my IRT's Cathedral Parkway Station (costing me exactly one nickel), and,as expected,by the time I arrived at the beach around ten in the morning on that sticky July day, there must have been already half-a-million like-minded parched visitors frolicking on sandy beach blankets or dipping their suntan-lotioned sweltering bodies into the briny cool waters of the Atlantic.

I had about three dollars on me, feeling sure I needed no additional funds. After all, the subway roundtrip came to a dime, and king-sized franks could be obtained for 15¢. I had nothing else of value on me (even my dear father's family-crest signet-ring had slipped off my finger into the Atlantic a few months earlier) and I felt truly

great, because in spite of the oppressive 90-degree heatwave I could finally cool off my overheated body in the delightfully pristine sea breeze.

Earlier that morning I had already put on my blue bathing trunks and simply piled all my clothing somewhere in the hot sand, not too far from the water's edge, so that I could keep an eye on it while slicing my eager young body through the invigorating waves of the ocean.

Even while swimming out quite a distance I could still observe my small pile of clothing on the beach. What I particularly enjoyed were the not inconsiderable whitecaps in spite of the hazy summer atmosphere.

Finally, though, after a good half hour or so of a rather exhausting butterfly crawl that nevertheless cooled off my sizzling hot blood, I decided to call it quits and return to the beach, to relax, stepping as I approached land on a million pebbles and seashells and dragging my feet through the greenish rather slimy seaweeds bordering the water's edge. I also became aware that the undertow had turned out to be amazingly strong, that is the wellknown and fearsome backward flow running in the opposite direction of the water's surface, but being young (25) and agile I could, with some difficulty, manage to overcome the dragging pull of the ocean's undercurrent as I laboriously made my way out of the Atlantic. Yet with all the seaweed bordering the beach I became doubly conscious of the slippery green plants curling around my ankles, and as I finally stepped out onto dry land I kicked my right leg forcefully up in the air in order to propel those long weeds off my ankle..

To my unspeakable horror, however, what I now witnessed, froze my mind and body in a milli-second: Because it was not some green seaweed

I witnessed leaping in a high arc through the air from my right leg but my new American bathing trunks! The sea's undertow must have been so forceful at the time that it had actually succeeded in dragging my trunks down to my ankles and I had in fact propelled this bathing attire now high into the air,watching it sail indifferently through the atmosphere in what can only be described as a world-record long-distance flight.

And there I stood at the water's edge, completely denuded, and in less than a second it appeared as if all the Coney Island sunbathers were oggling me in total condemnation as my own horrified glance followed the dripping wet bathing trunks travail through the sudden summer breeze before coming triumphantly to rest with a sloshing loud plop right on top of the tanned flat belly of a teenage girl dozing in the sun. She bolted straight up,staring almost traumatically at the wet trunk on her stomach and an instant later her eyes focussed on me.

What she saw was a young wild man in his birthday suit jump in leaps and bpunds over a dozen appalled sunburned bodies to retrieve his trunks, only half-managing to cover his own virtuous pudenda.

The girl's screams, as she saw my body in the raw frenziedly heading for her, horrified me even more than the stupefying stares of the multitude of sunbathers, who appeared to be more interested in the sight of my genitalia than in any Samaritan process of helping me retrieve my blue shorts.

Pinching my eyes shut in shame, I snatched the bathing apparel from the hysterically screaming girl and literally jumped into them, then vaulted frantically over a number of prostrate

bodies and leaped in world-record time all the way back into the merciful cold waters of the ocean, swimming as fast and far out as I possibly could before making sure that life had returned once more to normalcy on terra firma.

About twenty minutes later, I risked everything and, still mortified, with my heart hammering out of control, stole like an ostracized leper slyly back to the mainland, which thankfully was no longer buzzing with excitement at the sight of a nude young man hunting an evasive bathing suit. Instead, the multitude of sunworshippers seemed totally indifferent to my reappearance from Neptune's briny waves and not even the young women on the beach paid the slightest bit of attention to me.

I lay completely motionless in the sand for an hour or so, getting a nasty bit of a sunburn, but finally dressed and then treated myself on the boardwalk to a sizzling frank at Nathan's, then to a hot candied apple, a banana dressed in chocolate-coating and, finally, a plastic stick topped by a large purple cloud of cotton candy.

Misfortune or happy ending, the Coney Island I remember of the late 1940s seems to be gone forever, but this little nightmarish brick of my memory bank still plays occasional havoc with the good times I remember enjoying there, as opposed to some of the later less dramatic visits I paid to Coney Island and Jones Beach.

While these weekend trips to the Atlantic considerably cooled off my overheated body, including bracing rides on the Cyclone and Wonderwheel, nature still compelled me to sleep many a summer's night on the tarpaulined roof of my 111th Street apartment building in order to catch at least a breath of the nocturnal air blowing across the adjacent Hudson, a gentle breeze of which I was deprived altogether in my tiny baking-hot room.

D.P., OR NOT D.P. - - THAT IS THE QUESTION. (1949)

All of us have to make a living somehow just to keep our heads above water and not drown in a sea of outrageous misfortune. Certainly I was no exception on my return from Hollywood in the spring of 1948 and I could truly consider myself lucky to be hired by an organization called Church World Service (CWS) and be trained there as a social worker for Displaced Persons (D.P.s) immediately after I had found my new lodging in a tiny room on 111th Street and Riverside Drive in Manhattan, not far from my sister.

The above-mentioned term "Displaced Persons" is almost totally unknown today, whereas during the period immediately following World War II it had become a household word. There were millions of such people in Europe in 1945 who had struggled to flee from the yoke of Nazism and Communism; many of these fugitives settled in camps in Western European countries, then in Great Britain and the United States.

With regard to these U.S.-bound D.P.'s, American sponsors, for the most part, had already started to apply in late 1945 to provide jobs and domiciles for these refugees, part of an assignment which also became the duty of CWS in making sure that their new homes and future employment would meet the highest living standards for them. It also became the job of these refugee organizations to arrange for booking a safe passage, mostly from Bremen, to the United States and from the U.S. port of entry to the final destination of the sponsors, regardless of whether these locations were situated in Brooklyn, Florida or California.

After a great deal of correspondence and telephone conversations, in the course of which many American sponsors were considered unsuitable for "adopting" a Displaced Person, close to 300,000 Jewish, Protestant and Catholic D.P.'s finally made it to the United States on ships like, for instance, the "General A.W. Greedy," arriving mostly on New York's Westside piers, like the one on 21st Street.

Frequently these vessels docked between 7 and 9 o'clock in the morning, and the relief organizations' first duty was to check the new immigrants' documents, then supply them with milk or juice containers and a few sandwiches, but only late in the afternoon when around a thousand of those "stateless persons" per ship had disembarked and been fully documented in accordance with our own reception lists, did it become our duty to transport them by special buses to either Pennsylvania Station of Grand Central Terminal and put each single D.P. or family of new arrivals on the right train, explaining to them exactly in their native language (most of them mastered rudimentary German), where they should change trains or get off and wait at the final destination for their American sponsors. We also supplied each D.P. with an envelope containing the railroad ticket and five dollars per person per day for nourishment on the way to their last stop. One should remember that at those times you could get a ham-and-cheese sandwich for a quarter. Certainly nobody ever went hungry on the long journeys to their sponsors.

Generally, things went without a hitch; sometimes the relief organizations had to put up the D.P.s overnight in some of the more inexpensive New York hotels - like the comfortable Chelsea on West 23rd Street - when their trains would not leave the city until the following morning and it became our duty then to pick them up at the hotel, since none of the new arrivals obviously knew their way around the city and their knowledge of English understandably, for the most part at least, left a lot to be desired still, and we could then finally put them on their trains the next morning. (At those times, air travel was largely unknown.)

Mishaps, of course, were bound to happen once in a while and even a few dramatic occasions that still sear my mind. For example,

there were the most moving reunions at the New York pier of family members, who had not seen each other in a decade and only heard accidentally or from postwar survival lists that their relatives had not perished during the war, but on one harrowing occasion I witnessed the scene of a former concentration camp inmate recognizing one of the brutal guards in his camp during the war and attacking him right there at the pier with the only weapon he owned: a pen knife, and it became our duty to pry them apart and hand both of them over to the police and let the authorities determine what to do with the two combatants. (Weeks later I learned that the suspected war criminal was deported back to Germany to stand trial there.)

Once, however, I was involved in an unfortunate incident that still haunts me to this day. It concerned a family of five people which shared exactly the same Lithuanian last name with another single person. The family of five was earmarked to travel from New York to their sponsor in California while the single man was slated to head for his destination in nearby Trenton.

Stupidly, I had handed the single man bound for New Jersey the envelope containing the five tickets for San Francisco plus a separate money envelope holding $125 in fives and tens while the family of a father, mother and three young children ended up with a total of five dollars and a single ticket that should really have been handed to the man bound for Trenton.

I put them all on the right trains, but naturally by the time the family of five had reached Chicago, the conductor and other railroad officials were at their wits' end trying to make clear to the quintet of new immigrants that their one ticket would let them only go as far as Trenton, that the five dollars for food would not even last them to the next stop, plus that they would have to return penniless to New York and get in touch with us at once for new funds and

the correct tickets. To add misery to misfortune, the family did not speak a word of English and became quite upset, almost hysterical, when they were ordered off the train and taken to another one back to New York, then go without food and drink when their five dollars had been spent.

Only the CWS telephone number on their identification tags around their necks prompted the train officials to get in touch with our office the next morning and explain the sorry plight of that family.

To pour more oil on this fire, the single guy bound for Trenton could not believe his eyes and good fortune in being paid $125.00 for a two-hour trip to New Jersey. Evidently when the conductor asked him for his ticket, the new immigrant produced the batch of five tickets allowing him to travel as far as California. When told that those tickets did not qualify him to go to Trenton, he could pay the New Jersey fare directly out of his ample financial reserves of $125.00, but he did have enough presence of mind to call us from Trenton the next morning and ask us what to do with the five railroad tickets to San Francisco via Chicago.

We told him to return the tickets and money at once to our New York office and were informed by him that he would gladly send the tickets back to us, but that he had just spent the balance on a new suit, some shirts and two pairs of shoes, firmly believing that it was our purpose in bestowing so much money on all the new immigrants as a welcome-to-the-United-States gift.

Of course, I was deservedly called on the carpet by the boss for my carelessness and raced back to Grand Central Terminal the next morning to meet the family of five and hand them a hastily bought quintet of new tickets and another envelope stuffed with $125.00. (The original San Francisco tickets arrived in the mail a few

days later to be used for future California-bound Displaced Persons.)

On top of it, the desperate family of five was immediately feted in New York with a sumptuous meal at Luchow's as well as a number of toys and dolls for the towheaded crying youngsters. I apologized most profusely to them in German for my unforgivable blunder and made it my mission to put all of them with the newly purchased tickets and $125.00 on the right train that night and then called their sponsor in California that they would arrive twenty-four hours later than originally planned.

People rarely realize that at that early stage of the post-war era the word "Holocaust" was not that frequently mentioned; it really developed as a world-renowned title or epithet for the wartime extermination of the Jews only in the late 1940s, but the U.S. took pity on the survivors of the Holocaust by granting them visas to this country by the hundreds of thousands, which to my way of thinking also served as a means to undo the horribly restrictive 1930's immigration policies for highly educated German refugee Jews and non-Aryans, who were not granted visas to enter the under-populated United States within a matter of a year or two and thus ended up in Nazi death camps.

My family perished in the Holocaust foremost, of course, because of Hitler's bestial policies, which were wildly applauded by the vast majority of Germans and Austrians, but also because of the U.S. State Department's revulsion of those potential immigrants, with the end result that Washington declined to accept virtually all of these refugees to their shores.

Were these, in fact, untrue, cynical, meaningless words when Emma Lazarus's "New Colossus" can be found on the base of the Statue of Liberty, inscribed on a bronze plaque: "...Give me your tired, your poor, Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming

shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!"?

Hitler had deprived these non-Aryan masses of their German citizenship in November 1938 and threatened them with extermination in case of another war, yet nothing softened Washington's heart as it leaned back and tut-tutted the progrom which unfolded on frontpages and newsreels throughout the world. And the German dictator could rightfully point an accusing finger at Washington, claiming that no country, not even the U.S., really wanted to be saddled with those "dirty Jews," so what was the point of wagging a finger of reproach at Nazi Germany for wanting to kick them out in the first place?

Today, the U.S. is burdened with almost ten million illegal, poorly educated immigrants and there is hardly any outcry or even a critical murmur about that wrong, that unlawfulness, although the U.S. population since the 1930s has ballooned to almost 300 million inhabitants. True, economic conditions today are better than they were in the 1930s, but a puny 300,000 desperate German refugees (most of whom were later exterminated by the Nazis) would not even have amounted to a drop in the American bucket.

I love the United States and have helped to resettle thousands of postwar refugees in this country, first in hotels, like the Chelsea on New York's West 23rd Street, or the Marseilles and Whitehall, and in the evenings I tried to drown my sorrow (that my own family, except for my sister Annemarie, could not be resuscitated and take advantage of this new rescue mission) by frequenting some double-features that diverted my conscience-stricken attention (that I had survived the war and my family had not) at nearby movie theaters such as the Thalia, Beacon, Riviera and Symphony on Broadway. And even to this day, indigenous Americans

ask me if I'm not grateful that Americans had saved my life. Yes, they did - - due to the fact that the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. That's when they openly entered the war on Great Britain's side and helped Churchill to win the war, but I still smart from Washington standing idly by when my family frantically begged to come to the United States in the late 1930s and was turned down by the U.S.Consulate in Berlin because the German immigration quota at the time amounted to a puny 25,000 persons per year and virtually not a single one of those Jewish and non-Aryan applicants that had to wait for years for their immigration quota number to come up survived the Holocaust.

Perhaps that is the reason why I passed the fog-enshrouded Statue of Liberty dry-eyed on December 8, 1947 when I could finally set foot on this land of the free.

Grateful and proud I always was to be an American citizen and to live in the United States, but I have also shown my gratitude to this country by annually paying my taxes in full, by working on these shores non-stop for forty-nine long years and expressing my thoughts fearlessly, and even in my eighties I am still slaving on this very manuscript. I have never broken the law or applied for welfare, and for decades I have burned the midnight oil writing book after book - fiction and non-fiction - as soon as I got home from my office job and translating about ten more books into English.

I have paid my dues, like millions of other lawful immigrants, and did not complain about the hardships I had to endure; yet in the end I must admit that I have precious little to show for all my efforts and exertions, for my decades of toil, tears and sweat. Like billions of others, I am an unsung Mensch, who tried to excel, yet failed to make a dent in the human machine that runs this globe of ours. Gangsters and mass-murderers are remembered on page and tape; the honest industrious strivers seem to be lost forever

among the multitude of mediocre achievers whose works and ashes will ultimately be blown away with the ageless winds of time.

CLOBBERED BY A MOVIE STAR. (1948)

It happened the year after my December 1947 arrival in the United States when I came across an ultra-liberal article in the newspaper "The New York Star" (now defunct),written by,of all people, the beautiful but not major ex-movie star of those days, Ann Shirley.Probably because of her liberal views,she had been hired by the paper as a show-business columnist,frequently defending the later anti-McCarthy performers of those overheated dangerous days when the junior Senator from Wisconsin liked to rule and determine what was and what was not intellectually and politically acceptable to the American people.

Although I was no admirer of the Senator's tactics,slandering and defiling the reputation and destroying the careers of many fine,patriotic American citizens,whose liberal views clashed with those of the senator,I still sympathized with the fact that Soviet-style communism,while Stalin lived and ruled,was a nefarious philosophy,whose adherents had to be put out of office,just like the followers of Nazism.

However, in one of her columns,Ms.Shirley favorably reported on the political views expressed by the fine American author and playwright Ben Hecht,who is best-known today for his play "The Front Page" and his screenplay of "Spellbound." In one of his articles, Ben Hecht had attacked England bitterly over its then economic and military stranglehold of the Middle East,announcing that he celebrated a holiday in his heart every time a British soldier had been killed in pre-Israel Palestine. It must be remembered,furthermore,that Britain alone had been the land that had saved my life in 1939,and in my angry reaction to Ms. Shirley's column I fired off a vitriolic letter to her,not so much defending the British Empire as to attack Mr.Hecht,stupidly claiming that he had no right to insult the only country that had saved Western civilizatiom in 1940,and my life in particular, as well as

that of almost 10,000 other children from certain death at the hands of the Nazis while all the other Western countries had failed to do so before World War II.

A couple of days later already, I received a charming note from Ms. Shirley, in which she asked me whether I'd give her permission to print my letter in the "Star", with her reply to it a day or two after.

Feeling on pretty safe grounds with my rebuttal to Mr.Hecht, I gave her my consent within twenty-four hours, and a day or so after my letter appeared in her daily, she came out with her own blistering response. It decimated, literally murdered my views about Mr. Hecht expressing his opinion.

With a literary flair, she demolished my letter and my views in the most democratic Jeffersonian fashion imaginable, to the effect that however disagreeable and nefarious somebody's political opinions may be, nobody in the world had the right to censor or forbid publishing them, that indeed such tactics smacked of fascism and had no place in American society.

Of course, Ann Shirley proved to be correct, and her newspaper response more than anything else I had ever read in my life helped to turn me into a hardheaded liberal overnight. I smarted from the blow dealt me in public (with my own permission) for weeks and rightly so, but in retrospect this anything-but-dumb blonde, who is no longer with us, literally and figuratively changed my political and perhaps my personal outlook on life. Years later (having obtained the address of her retirement home) I wrote her a letter of gratitude for opening my eyes to the views of others, regardless of how alien such views were to my own opinions, but this time I did not receive a reply from her! Even more regrettable, I have lost the two columns carrying my letter and her devastating, all-American response.

SUN AND SMOKE. (1950)

Almost every human being will sooner or later be troubled by some ailment, minor or major, that could readily have been avoided by the cessation of a habit that is obviously deleterious to one's personal health.

In my own case I had been bothered by two most annoying deficiencies in my health when I was still in my twenties. One of these ailments had been diagnosed and treated with hardly any medication , but by sheer common sense it finally resulted in a cure after my medical doctor on New York's West End Avenue, Dr. Günther Elias, had examined me thoroughly.

For about half a year I had been aware of one tiny pimple on each side of my forehead. Even though I had used any number of facial creams, neither of these salves ever helped to demolish these minuscule growths, but since they did not cause me any pain or fester with pus, I ignored them altogether...until one morning while shaving I noticed one of these pimples releasing a tiny drop of blood. At first I thought that I had inadvertently struck the pimple with my comb, causing it to bleed, but when a day or two later the other pimple started to bleed ever so slightly, I became more apprehensive. Still, there was no pain involved, but by the same token the two pimples would not disappear and, even worse, the drops of blood being released became more and more frequent despite my applying all these ointments.

When people conversing with me started staring at my forehead and occasionally asked me about the cause of the bleeding, I had no ready answer for them; but when the effusion of blood after months of procrastination deteriorated and began to soil my pillow at night, I finally became disconcerted enough to visit the specialist Dr. Elias then recommended to me, Dr. Ann Hill.

This capable and attractive young dermatologist performed a biopsy on me by removing the pimples and the surrounding skin area, covered my forehead / up with two large ointment-soaked bandages that gave me the appearance of a horrible headwound inflicted upon me by the shrapnell of a hand grenade, and a week later I paid Dr. Hill another visit and was declared safe and sound by her. Evidently the lab had confirmed that the two growths could have developed into malignant skin cancer if I hadn't had them removed. Dr.Hill also gave me some sound advice: Never to take a sunbath again and especially in summer to keep my head covered since my light skin was quite susceptible to being affected by the altra-violet rays of the sun. She explained, almost maternally, that it would be wiser not to be so vain, but to walk around instead with my own [illegible] skin-color/that nature had given me than to be deeply tanned and end up with incurable skin cancer. The way she put it was: A tanned corpse cannot enjoy its good looks. Also, if God had intended the white race to look tanned He would have let us be born tanned.

Her common-sense approach helped me enormously in avoiding being exposed to too much sun and enjoy life just as much untanned.

Oddly enough, just about a year earlier, I had been cured by Dr. Elias himself: this time due/to another stupid,self-inflicted habit of mine and its deleterious after-effects.

For a year or two,I had been suffering from an/increasingly excruciating pain in my nostrils. I simply could not explain the cause of it, and when Dr.Elias examined the inner cavities of my nose with a nasal flashlight, he informed me after a few seconds already that I had done enormous damage to the interior lining of my nose. He wanted to know whether I smoked a lot and exhaled the cigarette smoke through my nostrils. I marvelled at

the acuity of that question because I could reply only in the affirmative. Next he asked me whether I had any cigarettes on me and I produced an unopened package of Lucky Strikes. Instead of returning them to me, he stood up and ground the pack under the heels of his shoes, then picked up the remnants and returned the shredded tobacco in the pack to me.

Stunned, I was told by him that he had just killed the culprit which had burned the inner lining of my nostrils. And if I ever smoked a cigarette in my life again, he added, I should try visiting another GP in the future, because failing his advice, I could not be helped by him.

I respected Dr. Elias no end and was shattered by his prognosis as well as by his wanton act of destroying my private property. Nevertheless, it should be realized that all this occurred decades before the medical profession discovered a linkage between tobacco and cancer, even though the doctor never brought up the word "cancer" when examining me. Obviously, Dr. Elias felt strongly enough about his verdict to demolish my cigarettes, and incur my wrath, and when he told me to see him again in a month, I knew beforehand it would be incredibly hard for me to go without a smoke for the rest of my life, but in retrospect, over half a century later, I am glad I had the willpower to abide by his demand of prohibiting any more smokes.

Of course, Dr. Elias proved to be right. Within a month, nature had started to replace the burned interior of my nostrils with a healthy pink moist lining, and the devastating pain and headaches had disappeared.

The doctor also helped my sister with her own minor ailments: she had always been fond of him - and to this day I own a photo taken of her at a party he gave for his favorite patients in 1951 -

and was rather taken aback, as was I, when she learned later that he had had an affair with/his Ellen nurse , the truly charming sister of Lothar Markiewicz, who had arrived in England, like me, with a Kindertransport in 1939 and spent the first vacation there with me in Dorset (see chapter " Painting Fences with a Greenhorn"). What had once raised eyebrows of concern, today is dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders.

What was truly shocking, however, and deeply saddened Annemarie and me, was the news not long after 1951 that this magnificent doctor and friend, Günther Elias, had dropped dead of a heart attack in his office while examining a patient. He was only in his fifties. Physician, heal thyself!

HELPING ETHEL WATERS. (1951)

A most wonderful theatrical and movie personality, ~~who had~~ whom I had admired in films already back in England in the 1940s, was the African-American cabaret singer and actress Ethel Waters. She made her movie debut in 1929 and had appeared in such films as "Cabin in the Sky," "Tales of Manhattan," "Cairo," "Pinky" and was one of the first female black performers to give a concert recital at Carnegie Hall.

Even more important, I became a really great fan of hers when I saw her 1950 Broadway performance as one of the stars in Carson McCullers' "The Member of the Wedding," which she later repeated in the movie. A few months after I had attended her Broadway performance in the McCullers play, I happened to come across her near Fifty-Third Street in Manhattan. She was standing at the Broadway corner trying to hail a cab in a steady drizzle, but not surprisingly (for that period in history) none of the cabs would stop for this middle-aged colored lady, although many of them had no fare at the time. Finally, I stepped forward, addressing her by her name. She turned around to me and explained that she was in a great hurry and had no time to give autographs. I explained that this was not my intention and asked her if I could be of some assistance to her with getting a cab. She did express her gratitude and I stepped to the curb and in less than a minute a yellow cab indeed stopped a few feet from me. I held the door open for Ms. Waters as she approached the taxi, whereupon the driver uttered a curse at me and stepped on the gas, speeding away while reaching back and closing the door.

That slight incensed me and I shouted after him that he was

an "effing" bastard, then apologized to Ms. Waters for cursing in her presence.

She assured me with her famous laugh that she had heard these words before but agreed with me in characterizing the driver in that fashion.

Suddenly she turned to me and enquired where I was born since she had become aware of my accent. I explained to her that I was born in Germany, but that I had spent the war-years in England. Within a second she seemed to forget about being in a hurry and asked me whether I had been a POW during the war. I gave her a very truncated version of my past and explained that I too had been discriminated against, also that I had been a friend of Leslie Howard's (whom she had never met), and that this did not prove to be the only time that I had hailed a cab for members of the theatrical profession.

At that, she pulled me (out of the rain) to the protection of a nearby doorway and wanted to know whether I was a doorman by profession since I had hailed cabs apparently for a living, and whether I even had gotten a taxi for Laurence Olivier, (her favorite.) I explained to her that I did not hail cabs for a living and that I had only seen Laurence Olivier on stage and screen and never had any personal contact with him, much as I had wished, even though I was literally born into the film milieu due to my father. I continued to enlighten her about my meeting with the two movie stars that I had hailed a cab for in London, namely in November 1947 shortly before coming to the United States: Paulette Goddard and Burgess Meredith. They had recently been married and were visiting postwar England, I told Ms. Waters (in fact) I did see them looking rather forlorn on Regent Street, doing their best to find a cab. Of course, both of them were

white, yet for some unexplainable reason not a single taxi was stopping for them. I do recall Mr.Meredith wearing a rather shabby raincoat while Ms. Goddard looked like a publicist's dream of a Hollywood movie star, which indeed she was.

First I wondered whether I should approach them and ask for their autographs, but then I thought, rather not, that they would be more interested in finding a taxi. So I approached them and asked whether they would want me to help them find a cab and Ms. Goddard grabbed my right hand and trying to impersonate a Cockney accent exclaimed how grateful they'd be since they had been standing there for a bloody fifteen minutes already without anybody stopping for them. Somehow I could not help showing off to those two stars and I simply stepped suicidally onto the road and waved down a cab. The driver cursed at me and I rushed to his frontseat and whispered to him that the couple were world-famous movie stars and identified them to him.

To my (and the movie couple's) astonishment, the driver immediately exited from his chauffeur's seat and rushed around the taxi, opening the door for them. He introduced himself to Ms. Goddard as being Jewish (which she also was) and how much he admired her husband Charlie Chaplin. This may have been the wrong thing to say since she and Chaplin had been divorced a few years already,and after Ms.Goddard's face clouded over at the mention of Chaplin in front of her new husband Mr.Meredith, it fell to me to whisper into Ms.Goddard's ear to tell the cabbie where they wanted to go before he changed his mind and let them stranded in the downpour. Mr.Meredith nodded in agreement and the two stars entered the cab as Ms.Goddard flashed me a most grateful smile. Ethel Waters loved the story and a minute later I succeeded in catching a cab for her. She also gave me a smile I never forget

My serendipitous encounter with Ms. Waters, however, did not turn out to be the only "musical connection" I made in 1951.

Mr. Hansen, a Norwegian colleague of mine at the Displaced Persons organization I was working for, had privately arranged for a to-me unknown Hungarian pianist, Mr. Karolyi, to come to this country, and after a long while he succeeded in hiring Carnegie Hall for a recital of his "protégé" on its prestigious stage.

That musical program took place on a weekday in the early afternoon and most of our DP organization's staff took the afternoon off to attend the concert.

Frankly I was not overly impressed by Karolyi's artistry and rendition of Brahms and Beethoven, but a couple of days later The New York Times gave the pianist a blistering, a downright devastatingly poor review, with the result that he insisted on being shipped back to Europe, where apparently his piano playing was more appreciated. Whatever became of this artist thereafter I never found out, except that I never saw his name in the papers again.

But that same year, 1951, I heard some wonderful lectures - known as the Brampton Lectures - being given at Columbia University by the well-known art historian Lewis Mumford. He spoke exclusively to sold out houses, heading his lectures with the rather all-encompassing title: Art and Techniques.

These lectures I attended with one of my co-workers, the very attractive, spectacled Mary Jackson, who would then join me for a late snack at the nearby Tiptoe Inn on Broadway and empty her heart to me about her undecisive fiancé Bruce, who happened to be a West Point cadet and whom she began to suspect more and more of having an affair behind her back, because he never proposed to her.

But only after she confronted him with an either-or proposition was he forced to come to a decision: either he make up his mind and marry her within three months or she would return his ring to him and start going steady with a young man who she was becoming very fond of and had known longer than him: me.

Secretly, I hoped he'd still have cold feet and ignore the ninety-day ultimatum, because I was getting enormously fond of Mary.

Her threat and deadline, however, had the desired effect and did the trick -- darn it! -- and a quarter of a year later Bruce proposed to Mary.

I was not invited to the wedding.

FIGHTING WITH JACK DEMPSEY. (1952)

After I had moved back to New York from California in the late spring of 1948, I rented a furnished room with an Austrian family (naturalized U.S. citizens), the gentle and adorable Marianne and Hans Klemperer and their good-natured 27-year-old son George. Hans, who was already in his late sixties, had been arrested as a Jew immediately after Hitler had annexed Austria in 1938 and sent to a concentration camp, where he was horribly tortured by the SS and the shin of his right leg had been shattered by one of the guards. This fracture had never been attended to in the camp and began to fester to such a degree that even ten years after his release it still suppurated and had to be cleaned of pus by his wife day after day.

(A few years later, in 1954, while I was at work, Mr. Klemperer succumbed to the tortuous pain and pussy wound of his splintered shin, and by the time I reached home from work that evening his body had already been removed. He was buried a couple of days later, about a week before George, his son, was to marry his sweetheart Lotte.)

Marianne took the death of her husband well in stride, probably because she knew how horribly he was still suffering from the wound inflicted upon him by the Nazis sixteen years earlier. Consequently she continued, as before, with her business of renting out rooms.

The Klemperers always claimed to be related to the symphony conductor Otto Klemperer and the actor Werner Klemperer (he played Colonel Klink in the successful comedy TV series "Hogan's Heroes"), but these stars never contacted the Klemperers with whom I lived at 611 West 111th Street in Manhattan right on Riverside Drive. Here I had moved after a year from a minuscule to a more comfortable airy room overlooking Riverside Park (where I always read my Sunday New York Times), the Hudson and the New Jersey

coastline, if I poked my head out of one of the two windows far enough.

Soon after I had settled into their apartment, a young woman, a couple of years younger than I, moved into another of the Klemperer rooms and we always shared breakfast in the kitchen before setting off in the mornings to our respective jobs.

At the time I was employed as a social worker,taking care of Displaced Persons, and the young woman - Ella Graham Massie - studied to become a ballet dancer. She had a gorgeous figure, an angelic face that slightly resembled that of Audrey Hepburn, was an extremely outgoing,friendly person who attracted the male sex like flies are attracted by the flickering flame of a candle. In that respect I was no exception and had a terrible crush on her. Still, I realized I did not stand much of a chance in becoming the sole subject of her affections in spite of our long nocturnal discussions and figured rather boyishly that in order to enhance myself in her eyes I should get a good tan.

So one Sunday morning in the summer of 1948 I went up to the roof of my apartment building and stayed there for about five hours, roasting and toasting myself. At that time, being sunburned had not been associated yet with skin cancer,but the sad fact remains that I suffered the most terrible sunburn of my life. I was literally burned to a red-hot cinder and could not lie on my back or my stomach that evening, in spite of all the Nivea and Noxcema skin creme I lavished on my scorched body.

Naturally fate would have it that that very night Ella came into my room and became most amorous,hugging and kissing me passionately. The trouble was that every time she touched my skin I cried out in pain until she finally gave up and returned in a huff to her room. I cursed myself and fate that this wonderful chance at making love to this gorgeous young woman should have been nixed by my

own vanity of looking freshly tanned in her eyes.

Not so surprisingly, my darling Ella felt ticked off by my lack of response and looked for greener pastures in her ballet class, whch could brag of a few heterosexual boys who were only too grateful to become the goal of her affection .

Evem so, Ella still had a warm spot for me in her heart and went so far as to invite me to meet her parents in Lynchburg, Va.

We went there by train in the summer of 1953 on one of the hottest and most humid days of the decade. Since the train was scheduled to leave in mid-afternoon, Ella and I decided to take in the first show at Radio City Music Hall to see Audrey Hepburn's Oscar-winning performance in "Roman Holiday" opposite Gregory Peck. Like everybody else, we loved the movie, but since that theater was well-known for its great air-conditioning and we had entered this huge movie palace drenched in sweat and without so much as a jacket, after about twenty minutes we had cooled off to such an extent that half an hour into the fabulous stage show with the deservedly popular Rockettes we began to shiver and could not even generate so much as a semblance of warmth in our bodies by hugging each other.

After that wonderful movie we rushed to the railroad station and took the train to Richmond. By the time we arrived in Lynchburg, where one of Ella's three brothers (who kept biting ice-cubes throughout our entire vacation) picked us up in his car, we were sniffling and sneezing as though competing for a prize in a bronchial-catarrh contest, and for the next five days of our stay in the fabulous Massie home our sniffles increased to a bombastic cold of coughs and explosive sneezes that we could hardly look out of our eyes; they had turned so watery that the entire vacation

was utterly ruined for both of us. The Massie parents, though, proved to be a most dignified, gracious, hospitable couple, especially Ella's amiable mother, but for the first time in my life I became aware of the total segregation there of the black and white races, of which I had never been made so conscious in New York City since I had had virtually no contact with African-Americans, or Negroes as they were still called at the time.

Actually my first personal encounter with segregation happened already in Virginia during the trip to Ella's parents when I had to go to the men's room at one of the railroad stations where the train was held up for about half an hour and I had left the railroad car to buy some hot dogs for Ella and me. While I was relieving myself a few minutes later in the station's restroom, an elderly African-American gentlemen next to me suddenly addressed me, asking me point-blank what I was doing here. I frowned at him and asked him what it looked like to him I was doing. His answer was that I had no right to urinate here and my response was that if I had no right to relieve myself in a men's room, he didn't have it either. It was at that juncture that he pointed out to me that this bathroom was only meant to be used by colored people and that white folks had to use another facility.

I was flabbergasted, never realizing that even restrooms in this land of the free were segregated.

The Massies had a few African-Americans working for them on the land and in their spacious mansion, and even though they treated them truly magnificently, with generosity and kindness, their own homes that I visited with Ella were devoid of all sanitary appliances, such as toilets and running water, and turned out to be mostly ramshackle wooden huts with one single window, dilapidated

shacks that smelled of urine and mould and were infested with hundreds of flies buzzing around our heads and leaving their droppings on the spider-infested window pane in the steamy semi-darkness. How anybody could live, could survive, in those terrible subhuman conditions was a puzzle to me. Of course, these shabby segregated housing accomodations, reminiscent of "Uncle Tom's Cabin," no longer exist, but it still disturbs me greatly today that these poor black folks had never revolted their living conditions by then. Or virtually never if we recall Nat Turner.

In New York, one strange episode with Ella stands out in my mind over half a century later. One Saturday evening, in the summer of 1952, I had invited Ella to a sumptuous meal at Jack Dempsey's restaurant on Broadway near Fiftieth Street.

We had enjoyed a wonderful meal of two truly juicy steaks, broiled to perfection, and then drank one double-daiquiri after another, becoming happier and more boisterous with each new drink. Around midnight I asked the waiter for the check and to my horror realized that the bill came to around thirty-five dollars, a horrendous sum for someone whose weekly salary at that time came to the princely total of about forty dollars before taxes. In fact, I only had a twenty-dollar bill on me and Ella not even a couple of bucks. (Credit cards did not exist yet in my personal life.) I told the waiter with some trepidation that we did not have enough money to pay for our meal and drinks and he politely informed us that in that case we should wait a minute or so. We watched him approach Jack Dempsey, who frequently occupied a center table right in the window looking out on Broadway, where he sat talking to friends or enjoying a meal by himself. Seeing him there, did attract customers and certainly plenty of kibbitzers staring at him through the window. A minute later, the waiter returned to our

table and announced that Mr. Dempsey would like to see me. I was in my late twenties at the time and became increasingly nervous, not knowing how this former heavyweight world champion would react to my lack of money.

In a deep but amiable tone of voice, Dempsey asked me why I did not have enough money with me and I explained to him that I never realized the drinks would amount to more than what I had on me, but I added immediately I was willing to help out in the kitchen and wash dishes to make up for the absence of money.

Dempsey shook his head and told me that he wanted to teach me a lesson for the future. He asked me whether I had some cash at home and I affirmed this to his satisfaction, whereupon he instructed me to go home right then and there, at midnight, and pick up enough money to pay for the balance of the meal and a couple of dollar's tip for the waiter. I said that was fine with me and returned to my table, explaining everything to Ella, and both of us wanted to make our way past Dempsey's table to head for the restaurant's exit.

"Not so fast!" Dempsey raised his voice when we were about to pass his table. He gripped me firmly by the wrist, which, not surprisingly, stopped me short in my tracks.

"The girl stays here till you come back with the money, and so does your watch," he said in a no-nonsense voice.

I was flabbergasted and told him he could trust me. Obviously he did not, and to my embarrassment I had to pull the watch off my wrist, there and then, and hand it to him. Ella was just as scared as I was and started to tremble. Dempsey asked his male table companion to leave and then offered Ella the vacant seat opposite him. She sat down demurely, her hands shaking visibly, and Dempsey directed me to hurry back with the money so I could have my girl and my watch back.

I kissed Ella good-bye, then rushed out of the restaurant-bar,

with just enough money to pay for my subway-ride home, which at that time came to a nickel. Back in my room on 111th Street, I grabbed my last twenty-dollar bill from under my freshly laundered shirts and took the Local Broadway subway train back to 50th Street.

Before entering the restaurant at around one o'clock in the morning, I glanced through the window where I had left Dempsey and Ella and saw both of them still sitting at his table,laughing their heads off, having a wonderful time in front of about two dozen window-shopping onlookers. At least I was happy to realize that Dempsey had not knocked her out cold, a fate that I had actually feared more for myself. In a sly way, I was quite proud that these well-past-midnight onlookers were gazing enviously at my girl in the company of one of the world's most famous sports heroes, even though he hadn't been a champ since 1926 when he lost to Gene Tunney.

I entered the restaurant and Dempsey told me to pull up a chair, which I did, and then he asked me for the money I owed. I gave him the twenty-dollar bill and expected my five-dollar change, but Dempsey insisted that I should leave that amount to the waiter who had served us for hours. This shocked me as exorbitant, but I was in no position to argue with the Champ and did not want to appear cheap in Ella's eyes. So we continued talking together for maybe another half hour or so mostly about Ella's and my professions, which seemed to be of great fascination to Dempsey.

Finally, when we were ready to leave around two o'clock in the morning, Dempsey asked us if we felt like eating a bit, but I told him that I did not want to get into more financial straits that evening and he stopped a waiter for some coffee and cake,explaining to us that it was on the house.

Naturally,we thanked him profusely for his generosity and

hospitality, truly relishing the apple pie à la mode and coffee (tea for Ella), and when we got up to thank him again and say good-bye, he fished the twenty-dollar bill I had given him out of his pocket and pressed it into my hand, telling me to be more careful with spending my money in the future. Ella was just beside herself with joy at this friendly gesture, hugging him and kissing his cheek. Outside on the street, the kibbitzers watching us through the window, burst into wild applause, causing Dempsey to break into a big grin, and a few minutes later we took the subway home to our place on 111th Street (the second time for me that evening), giggling with joy and giddy with the ecstasy of being in love, and, equally important, with the memory of a magic adventure involving us and a world-famous person.

A more sober documentation of the end of that relationship and its novel aftermath can be found in the final section of the chapter headed "Loves That Did Not Last Long." (1949)

CITIZEN KUTTNER. (1953)

Most foreign-born residents in the U.S. go through it: the history test to be passed in order to become a naturalized American citizen. Obviously I was no exception. Only that in my case (1953) I confronted a monster of a man of whom it might justifiably be said that he didn't like the idea of foreigners becoming U.S. citizens.

For this test I had to be accompanied by two American citisens as witnesses and obviously I chose my closest relative, my sister Annemarie, and her girlfriend Ilse Low, who had both arrived in this country a year before I did and become U.S. citisens already in 1952.

Only a few people were present at 70 Columbus Avenue in Manhattan, where the test was to take place, and we waited our turn with the customary ten dollars to be paid for this naturalization process. Naturally we had arrived in our best Sunday fineries and, even more important, I had studied my American history paperback for weeks every night after work and asked Annemie and Ilse to test me thoroughly, which they did.

Finally, after a two-hour wait, it was my, respectively our, turn to enter the chamber of the interrogator. Three chairs were assigned to us and as I sat down on the center chair for this crucial test, I heard the corpulent middle-aged tester shout at my sister what the idea was to arrive in his chambers in a pro-British outfit. Annemie became flustered (her nerves had been shot to hell for years after her illegal life underground in Nazi Berlin) and she whispered, cowed and scared of any visible sign of authoritarian behavior, that she did not know what her questioner was referring to.

He in turn pointed accusingly at my sister's left side, where the breast pocket of her new jacket was located. All of us stared at it. And there, on that pocket, Seventh Avenue had sewn a tiny decorative crown encircled by a garland of laurel leaves.

Annemie explained tremulously that she had bought this jacket just a day or two earlier at Macy's because it fit well and happened to be her favorite color: royal blue.

That did it! The man exploded, jumping up from his chair, and continued to point at my sister's jacket, exclaiming that this was totally unacceptable to him. Did she have no shame at all appearing at a naturalization process in this anti-American outfit?

If it had been up to me, on an occasion in no way connected with my own naturalization, I'd have kicked the man out of his office for his totally unreasoable sadistic authoritarian behavior, but I could not even afford to come to my frightened sister's assistance less I'd ruin my own chances of becoming an American citizen.

Tears welled in Annemie's eyes and she started to tremble uncontrollably, but finally she got up to take off the offending jacket. The man shot her one last angry glance, then turned his attention to me. I explained to him that my sister meant no harm wearing the jacket and that her nerves had been greatly affected by having to live underground in Berlin during the war, in the course of which both our parents had been murdered in Nazi concentration camps.

In turn, I was snapped at by him that I had been summoned to answer questions about American history and not to interfere in his business by distracting him with German history.

Only then did he start firing questions at me: Who was the

eighth President of the United States? (Van Buren). Who the sixteenth? (Lincoln). Who were the first two Secretaries of State? (John Jay and Thomas Jefferson). Who was the second Secretary of the Treasury? I stopped and gaped vacant-eyed at the man facing me, then ventured to say that the first U.S. Secretary of the Treasury was Alexander Hamilton.

My examiner slammed his fist on the table separating us from him and yelled at me whether I knew the difference between first and second. I told him that I had no idea who the second Secretary of the Treasury was.

Immediately he snapped back that any native-born American idiot could tell him it was Oliver Wolcott. Did I at least have an inkling who the present Secretary of the Treasury was? The man was frequently mentioned in the papers, so I knew it was George M.Humphrey. Next, he demanded to know the year Texas joined the United States. I ventured to say that Texas President Anson Jones formally handed over power to the U.S. in 1845 or 1846. But my inquisitor was not satisfied; he demanded a definite date. Fearfully I ventured 1846, which barely pacified him; he just stared at me; evidently I had picked the correct year.

A few additional history questions caused me fortunately relatively little sweat, but finally he did let me go and asked if I myself had any questions about my naturalization. I said yes, I did, a couple of them. First, could he tell me who the first U.S. President was to have actually been born in a state while it was already a state of the Union? The man stared at me for a few seconds as if I had just called him a blithering idiot, then cleared his throat and ventured Van Buren. I got up and shook his hand, congratulating him on the right answer, adding

impudently that now he was a fully-fledged American citizen.

Annemie, shocked at my uncalled-for insolence, immediately told me to apologize to the man.

Instead, my bullying test-giver rose from his chair and burst out laughing, probably proud of/his own knowledge of exhibiting American history, then padded my shoulder and exclaimed: "Good question, something I'll ask my next victim!"

So that's what we were in his eyes: Victims! But he wanted to know what my second question was. And I asked him,point-blank, whether I had passed the examination.

He nodded and simply told me that I'd have to wait for another six to eight weeks for the swearing-in process; and that was that.

Relieved that I had passed the test, I treated Annemie and Ilse (both of whom had had a much easier time for their naturalization test,having confronted a charming old examiner) to see a play with me on Broadway a week or so later, starring the Scottish actress Deborah Kerr in "Tea and Sympathy," a drama we loved, and as a special unexpected bonus we saw one of the great movie stars of the twentieth century in the audience: Cary Grant. We did watch him go backstage after the show and emerge a few minutes later with Ms. Kerr and her husband, a former pilot with the RAF and actually one of the original First of the Few fighter pilots during the Battle of Britain in 1940. That year (1940) also happened to be the time she had made her own film debut as a supporting player in Shaw's "Major Barbara." Somehow that couple got separated in the unruly mob outside the theater, and she kept shouting, "Tony, Tony, where are you?"

But then, finally, came my Naturalization ceremony on November

30, 1953 at the South District Court House and it was here that a superannuated judge in a shaky voice administered the oath to about two hundred new citizens, ending it all by reading a few Lincolnesque quotes from a handful of wrinkled sheaves.

Being a new citizen, I was fortunate enough to celebrate this joyous occasion at the home of my sister with Ilse and Mrs. Elisabeth Landmann, the very same wonderful Frau Landmann, who fourteen years earlier had helped me to emigrate from Nazi Germany with a Kindertransport to England.

Just about that time I remember writing a letter to Bosley Crowther, the incredibly powerful movie reviewer of The New York Times, which was published in a Sunday edition of the paper. In that letter I listed my own selection of the best international juvenile film performances of the first half of the twentieth century, topping it with my own choice of the little-known Ivan Jandl as the Czech refugee boy in Fred Zinnemann's deeply moving movie "The Search." To my and Bosley Crowther's surprise not a single reader ever responded challenging my letter,giving their own selection.

At that time I had also heard a great deal about a picture called "Times Gone By" and I saw it in the New York Museum of Modern Art. Unfortunately I can't remember a thing about the contents of the film or even who played in it, but my attending it still left an indelible impression on me, because of an incident involving the person sitting next to me in the auditorium.

By the time the movie had started the seats next to mine still remained vacant, but a few minutes after its opening credits had been screened a man and a woman took the two seats next to mine and soon enough a most disconcerting noise kept interfering with my watching and enjoying the film. The woman who had

parked herself next to me evidently was wearing a number of brass bracelets on both wrists and each time she moved her arms these metal rings rattled and clattered noisily, with the result that they completely diverted my attention from the contents of the film's action.

Finally, after about half an hour of this most disturbing annoyance, I turned to the lady and whispered to her whether she'd be so kind and remove the bracelets for the duration of the film since the noise she was making with them made it impossible for me to concentrate on the action of the movie and its dialogue.

Even though she glared at me and I could see the gleaming white of her eyes in the dark, it was her escort who spoke up in a harsh voice brimming with anger that I should mind my own business and not dare to approach the lady again.

Naturally I was not prepared to look for a fight in the dark (or even after the show) over such a trifling matter and simply tried to ignore the clanking of her bracelets.

Oddly enough, though, the lady must have realized that her wristbands, indeed, were interfering with the story on the screen for part of the audience, because a few seconds later she seemed to make a sincere effort in keeping her hands still on her lap for the remainder of the film.

When the lights went on again I turned to the woman and simply said "Thank you, ma'am," and almost collapsed back in my seat. The reason: the woman I had reprimanded during the film's screening was unmistakably none other than Gloria Swanson. About three years earlier I had seen her as the star of "Sunset Boulevard." Her escort simply looked daggers at me while Ms. Swanson only gave me a look that made me clearly understand that she was one of the world's immortal movie queens and, oddly enough, that look did

not differ much from the final imperial shot of her in the Billy Wilder movie when she told Cecil B.de Mille that she was ready for her next shot.

Actually, I felt like informing Ms.Swanson then that I had also acted in a Billy Wilder movie, although at that period in time in the summer of 1931 I was merely an eight-year-old kid and in a crowd scene near my Kaiser Allee home in Berlin; also that Billy Wilder himself had at that stage of his career started out to work only as the scriptwriter of the film I had acted in,"Emil und die Detektive."

(In retrospect, it must be regretted that of the very early twentieth-century German and other European film classics,especially the silent pictures, almost eighty percent of them have either been lost or their celluloid reels have crumbled to dust.)

But on that particular MOMA occasion we lived in the 1950s and I had begun to settle as a new bona fide citizen in the New World. So I smiled more sheepishly than gamely at the immortal movie diva, a smile that she plainly did not appreciate at all, and with one final devastating glance in my direction she rose from her seat and followed her escort out of the theater, where people recognized and applauded her as she made one more of her regal exits into a waiting limousine.

That same year, a few weeks later, I attended another entertainment spectacle, this one being sponsored by an organization called Cinema 16, of which I was a member under the aegis of its director and founder Amos Vogel. His hard work and great talent as a movie historian had enabled us members of Cinema 16 for a small annual fee to view some of the rarest old-time silent and sound documentaries and fictional films from all over the world at the New York Fashion Institute of Technology on 27th Street and Seventh Avenue in Manhattan. Even lectures by some of the best-known screen luminaries were

given, and it shouldn't come as a surprise that the lecture I favored over all previous talks turned out to be a late-evening two-hour address by Alfred Hitchcock, after which, he told the SRO crowd later, he received the longest ovation of his life.

On another occasion, the speakers discussing a subject called "Film and Poetry" turned out to be Arthur Miller and the famous Welsh poet Dylan Thomas, whose early 1940s British documentary on the Welsh countryside is still to my mind one of the loveliest black-and-white films I have ever seen. On that October 1953 occurence, Dylan Thomas read a short excerpt from his recently completed masterpiece "Under Milk Wood," which prompted me the following day to go out and buy a copy of it at a Marboro bookstore.

However, what shocked me during that magnificent lecture of those two literary giants, was the wine-red facial hue of the Welsh poet, which I personally attributed to high blood-pressure and his well-known profligate binges. All the greater was my shock and my sadness (but not altogether my surprise) when, only a few days later, I read his obituary in the "New York Times" while he was on that celebrated U.S. lecture tour.

A couple of months later, Marianne Klemperer, my landlady on 111th Street and Riverside Drive, gave me a small party, which was attended by her ailing husband Hans, her son George and his new wife Lotte, and a Peter Walther, lodger, who had placed an ad for somebody willing to marry him in the German magazine "Constanza." He received dozens of replies from young German women since most of the eligible men in Germany had been killed in the armed services and during airraids in WWII. In the end he made a return trip to West Germany and soon brought back a truly gorgeous young woman from Hannover, whom he married in this country before moving to Philadelphia with her. Even though the Klemperers and I wrote a few letters to him there, we never heard from the couple ever again. Our last letter to them was returned to us by their landlady, marked: "Moved - Left no forwarding address."

As a postscript to this chapter, I can only say that over half a century after my own naturalization, I am incensed that today the new citizenship tests are often conducted in the applicants' own native languages, not in English, in order to make it easier for these petitioners, who have lived in the United States for over five years, to join this predominantly English-speaking country.

I ask myself how anybody today who has the brains to study the American Constitution and the Bill of Rights should lack the intelligence to learn rudimentary English after more than five years in the U.S.. After all, a dozen previous generations had been able to master sufficient English to answer the most basic American history questions in that language. And it baffles the mind why in the twenty-first century, the English language, in which the Declaration of Independence and the U.S.Constitution have been written, is still being prohibited from becoming the officially accepted language of this land that the immigrants have freely selected to live in.

I cannot imagine that today's immigrants are more stupid than those of the past two hundred years to learn English in at least five years of their domicile here, especially when no other country in the world has ever had a similar law on its books and simply permits its new citizens to ignore their newly acquired basic language as the U.S. all of a sudden does.

THE OPEN ZIPPER. (1954)

Certainly no incident of any lasting consequence in my life was the occasion when I encountered a rather embarrassing situation in the mid-1950s while leaving a Broadway theater after seeing a play whose title escapes me after half-a-century.

However, the mortifying event that followed immediately after the final curtain will forever remain indelibly carved in my mind.

It happened to be an evening performance in summer and obviously I did not have to wear a topcoat or windbreaker. However, when I rose from my seat after the show, I noticed to my horror that I had attended that evening's entire play with my pant's zipper undone.

Hot streams of blood rushed to my cheeks and as furtively as I could I glanced around at the members of the audience, who, like me, were slowly making their way up center aisle out of the theater, discussing the show. Fortunately nobody was paying the slightest attention to me as all of us walked up toward the exit.

Tremulously, my hands ventured to the bottom part of my pants and cautiously pulled the zipper up to the very top, just beneath my belt buckle. Relieved and smiling at my singularly clandestine effort to correct my failure in dressing up properly for a Broadway opening (no pun intended), I smiled amiably at my unknown and unknowing fellow playgoers and continued walking up the aisle at a snail's pace toward the back of the theater.

To my grave consternation, however, I soon became aware that my pants, for some reason, appeared to get heavier and heavier and I gazed with great alarm to the dome of the theater, trying to figure out what could possibly be the cause for this

additional weight to my trousers.

It was only after the orchestra audience was gradually reaching the back of the auditorium that I became conscious of the dowager in front of me turning around and demanding of me with a deep burning hatred in her eyes whether I was trying to steal her stole.

"Steal your stole?" I stuttered, completely flabbergasted by the accusation and animosity of an elderly woman I had never before seen in my life. I asked her why I would want to steal her stole.

Of all the things in the universe, she pointed - eyes and voice blazing with total unforgiveness - to the front of my trousers, where indeed her long fox stole was attached to their zipper.

My cheeks once more turned to fire and I stammered that I could not imagine how her stole got attached to the fly of my pants and was actually now trailing between my legs; in fact, to such an extent that I had been dragging it behind me like a long bridal veil and the members of the audience in the back of me were actually stepping all over it, which would, of course, explain the added weight to my pants.

I asked her whether she would be kind enough to follow me into a more private corner of the theater so that I could unzip my zipper there and return the stole to her. She was in no mood, however, to follow me into any such sinister location and started calling me a sex maniac who probably got his kicks out of seducing women in theaters by stealing their stoles. I assured her that this was not my intention and told her that she could call anybody to chaperone us into a corner of the theater so that I could undo my zipper there and return the stole to her.

The matron who must have been in her sixties and appeared to be the spitting image of Margaret Dumont, the dowager in the 1930s

Marx Brothers movies, grabbed me furiously by the wrist and dragged me and her fox stole to the back of the auditorium and challenged me to release her stole there and then. I volunteered to tear the stole free of my zipper, but she remonstrated that this would damage her fur since it would rip out a bunch of hair and she insisted that I pull my zipper down on the spot where she had cornered me and hand over the stole in mint condition.

As fate would have it, of course, I could not move the zipper past the hair of the stole that had gotten stuck halfway down in one of its grooves. Pearls of perspiration ran down my face as a crowd of fellow playgoers gathered around us, unwilling to depart from this spectacle that appeared to contain more suspense and drama than the play all of us had just witnessed.

I explained my sorry predicament to the increasingly angry dowager and wished that, if not God, at least Groucho would come to my aid.

To my great dismay, the infuriated bejewelled woman, without warning suddenly dropped to her knees and started, unasked and unwanted, to force down the zipper with both of her hands.

I telegraphed a prayer to God, begging for His assistance and staring heavenwards at the theater's cupola, where a flight of painted angels roamed and frolicked indifferently among the cumuli in an azure heaven, when all of a sudden I heard a divine lorldly voice demand behind me what we thought we were doing. The voice actually belonged to a uniformed or liveried usher who bore holes into my face with a pair of venomous eyes and insisted on knowing why I would not restrain my lust with this woman until we got home.

The dowager rose to her feet and, beetle-red, screamed at the usher that she had never seen me before and now insisted that the

usher pull down the zipper of my pants since she was unable to herself.
do so/ The usher simply stared at the woman, visibly distraught at being of two minds: whether to pull down a stranger's zipper in front of an audience eager to see the outcome of this strange theatrical scene or whether to leave this assignment to the bearer of the pants. This drama of conflicting actions obviously equalled the drama the audience had just dished out their hard-earned dollars for.

However, nothing would budge, neither the lady's fur nor my zipper. Finally, though, a deep stentorian voice, like a vaudevillian deus ex machina, resonated through the emptying theater and demanded to know what the trouble was. The man introduced himself as the manager of the theater and was dressed in a tuxedo with a white tie. After being apprised of the situation, he produced a small pocket knife from his pants' pocket and before the dowager could utter so much as/a cry of objection, he had cut the offending fur's hair from my person and handed the fox to the utterly aghast elderly lady.

I stepped back, relieved that this dramatic nightmare had finally come to a closure. The infuriated woman, seeing that virtually no damage had been done to her fur, threw it with a majestic sweep over her right shoulder and threatened the manager that she'd sue the theater for the deliberate and wanton destruction of her personal property. I beat a hasty retreat since I had no intention of being hauled into court for a defective zipper or, even worse, an open fly. Oddly enough, when I tried to pry the zipper open at home, I had no problem with it. One strong-armed tug and it obeyed me instantly all the way to its bottom.

JANNINGS AND DIETRICH.(1931-plus)

Since I was raised in Berlin in a movie milieu because my father, Dr. Paul Kuttner, happened to be the medical doctor-in-residence (Vertrauensarzt) at the then-world-famous UFA movie studios in Neubabelsberg outside Berlin from 1921-1933 and I could visit him there whenever I pleased, I often sat as a child on the lap of the best-known German filmstars who were temporarily under contract to that monopolistic German film company. The most famous of them undoubtedly was the German actor Emil Jannings. Years later my father told me that I had sat on the actor's lap when I was only three years old during the 1925 filming of "Variety," in which he played a sideshow operator deceived by a woman. Personally,though,I do not remember this occasion, nor do I recall today in which studio I sat on whose lap since my father also took medical care of film companies not associated with UFA.

Outside Germany, even today, Jannings,of course,is still best-known as being the first recipient of an Oscar, namely for his Hollywood performance in "The Way of All Flesh" and for his starring role in Josef von Sternberg's "The Blue Angel" opposite Marlene Dietrich, a role that brought Dietrich to the attention of Hollywood and started off her illustrious career there for the next forty years. I had never met Dietrich in Germany but saw her once in the late 1950s or early 1960s in New York's Central Park, pushing a baby carriage, bearing the child of her daughter Maria Riva. Passers-by recognized her immediately and everybody stared at her,of course, although by the same token nobody would disturb her privacy and ask for an autograph. Although it happened to be a chilly autumn day, she wore no sto-

ckings and her almost snowwhite legs appeared to have lost none of their famous luster and allure. There was no smile on her pale unpainted features and her pace was fast and business-like as though she did not appreciate being oggled at.

In her favor, additionally, a little-known fact must be brought into the limelight: namely, that she, like Conrad Veidt and Fritz Lang, never returned to Nazi Germany in spite of Propaganda Minister Dr. Goebbels's plea at the beginning of World War II in 1939 that they come back to the fatherland and resume their careers there, with promises of high salaries in non-political film-roles.

One film luminary to whom Dr. Goebbels did not extend a welcome-home mat was Billy Wilder, who later became one of Hollywood's most gifted directors. His Jewish background irked the Nazi minister and with some pride I can say that I played my part in a crowd scene of juvenile detectives when I was eight years old in 1931 in a film for which "Herr" Wilder wrote the script: "Emil and the Detectives."

That scene turned out to be a few shots being taken in front of Berlin's Café Josty, where the villain (played by Fritz Rasp) was smoking a cigarette and being watched by us young detectives.

This time it was not my father's pull that had landed me the job as an extra for this extraordinarily popular German movie (and book by Erich Kästner, which Disney re-made unsuccessfully after WWII), but the fact that I had simply joined the crowd of juvenile extras unnoticed since I lived across the street from it, which was then known as Kaiser Allee and following the war had been renamed Bundes Allee. Moreover, Café Josty was destroyed by the Allied airforce late in the war and has now been relocated to Berlin's Bellevuestrasse, miles away.

And, thank God, lightyears away also are the loathsome Nazi propaganda films "Der Ewige Jude" (The Eternal Jew) and "Jud Süss" (Jew Süss), which have been treated extensively on New York's History Channel in its brilliant 2002 documentary series "Hitler's Haulocaust."

Nevertheless, my own showbusiness career had not ground to a complete halt yet. My stint at "The London Week - What's On In London" as its Broadway correspondent continued until my marriage to Myrtil Romegialli in late 1956, up to that date and it was my good fortune to be allowed to interview many of the greatest old-time movie stars and Broadway luminaries in New York. These magazine clippings I still own almost half-a-century later, I am proud to say as an ever-star-struck individual. Among the celebrated performers I was lucky enough to interview in Old Gotham were such immortals as Sir Laurence Olivier, Julie Andrews, Jose Ferrer, Maurice Evans, Eartha Kitt, Bob Hope, Mary Martin, Esther Williams, Julie Harris, Maurice Chevalier, Hildegard Neff, Eddie Bracken, Dorothy Dandridge, Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, Alfred Hitchcock and Deborah Kerr.

MEETING AND MARRYING MYRTIL. (1956)

Just once in my life did I enter into a penpal relationship, namely when I was in my early thirties and placed an ad in the German magazine "Constanze," and soon wrote letters to the girl I later married, a fascinating, attractive, highly intelligent young woman in her early twenties, living in one of the most breathtakingly beautiful spots on Earth, one that overlooked Lake Como in northern Italy.

In those personals-column letters, Myrtil Romegialli and I emptied our hearts to each other at least two or three times a month and I distinctly recall one of my "romantic" confessions to her: that during World War II, in 1942, I had been incredibly lonely and unhappy, working for a year as a gardener near Malborough in Wiltshire, that I was literally being ostracized there as a "Hun" by some, as a "kike" by others, that I had actually fallen in love with the heroine of a novel I was reading then, Jane Eyre, and that for months in the winter in the bitter-cold attic I was living in I had actually fallen asleep each night with the Charlotte Bronte volume tucked in my arms.

Myrtil, in turn, wrote to me about her failures in life, her trials and tribulations, especially her frentic attempt to become a concert pianist. For years she had studied with Northern Italy's finest keyboard teachers and when she finally had an audition with the world-renowned Italian pianist Michelangeli, she gave it her best. Of course, many artistic hopefuls have been turned down by schools and teachers, but after her recital of approximately half an hour, Michelangeli lambasted the 19-year-old girl in such scathing vitriolic terms, calling her a total failure without any talent whatsoever, that Myrtil almost had a nervous breakdown and made an attempt at suicide. Only time, evidently, managed to heal the wounds to her pride, her assaulted dreams, but she never touched

the piano again; in fact, not even I had ever heard her play it in all the years we were together. Only gradually did she begin to write to me, a mere penpal, , about this heartbreaking event in her young life, but in the long run I suppose this confession of failed artistry to a total stranger, with no strings attached, seemed to work wonders for both of us, because I also happened to be an aspiring artist, in the literary field, and had so far failed in selling my work. Moreover, I loved classical music, I mentioned in my letters to Myrtil, since my mother had been a piano teacher in Berlin and she had often taken me as a child to concerts, featuring such world-renowned artists as Wilhelm Furtwängler, Wilhelm Backhaus, Walter Gieseking, Claudio Arrau and Georg Kulenkampf. (I never brought up the fact that I also liked lighter music as performed, in Germany, by such dance orchestras as led by Adalbert Lutter, Willi Steiner and Egon Kaiser, and later in England the dance bands under the baton of Geraldo, Jack Hylton and Henry Hall.)

Somehow Myrtil's and my psyche interlocked and became attracted to one another. In fact, after a year or two of this vivid interchange of correspondence and complete trust, Myrtil's mother, the former Irmgard Riemenschneider, a native of Hamburg, where my mother also was born, invited me to spend some time with the Romegialli family in their via Bellinzona villa half a mile from Lago di Como and less than that from the Swiss border.

I took a leave of absence from my job at Watson-Guptill, the how-to artbook publisher, and made my overseas trip to Italy on the "Cristoforo Colombo" late in July of 1956 when I was 33 years old. Midway to Europe, on the Atlantic, we came across the vessel's sistership, the "Andrea Doria" returning to the U.S. from Italy, and the crews and passengers of both ships exchanged enthusiastic shouts of greetings to each other. However, that enthusiasm changed over-

night to something utterly unforeseen and tragic.

Because when the ship's passengers, including me, came down to the diningroom for breakfast on July twenty-sixth, we were astonished to find the waiters in utter despair, smashing plates, cups and saucers, with some of them wailing almost hysterically.

Not being familiar with this strange seagoing custom, we passengers were informed that this was a traditional act of displaying the crew's grief and mourning when a sistership of a shipping line either had sunk or suffered a great loss of life at sea.

What had happened was that the "Andrea Doria" a day after we had exchanged greetings with her at high sea had accidentally been rammed by a Scandinavian freighter, the "Stockholm", off Nantucket, causing great damage to it and the loss of fifty-one lives. Of course, this bulletin was broadcast world-wide; Annemarie, my dear sister, I learned later, having forgotten the name of my vessel, thought that it actually was my steamer that had suffered loss of life and sunk. Annemarie, whose nerves had been shattered by hiding from the Nazis for most of World War II in Berlin, almost went berserk, fearing that I, her closest relative, had drowned in the Atlantic - - that is, until the 6:30 p.m. TV world news explained that the ship I was travelling on was not involved in the maritime disaster.

Another sidelight to this horrible incident turned out to be a passengers on my ship, who was also following these events closely and sidled up to me on the deck when I sneaked to the roomier First Class section of the ship and he asked me if I had heard any additional details regarding this tragedy. In the course of our ensuing conversation, he became aware of my German accent and started addressing me in flawless German. He asked me about my job and past and I did likewise about his life. He did look vaguely familiar to me and only at this juncture of our conversation did he

reveal his identity. He was the world-famous conductor Fritz Reiner.

However, this amiable encounter was not repeated when,a few days later, I disembarked in Genoa after a brief stop-over in Naples with its dormant Mount Vesuvius and was met by my penpal Myrtil Romegialli.

In fact, to me it appeared more like a hostile reception, because she did not feel like conversing with me at all, although her English was near-perfect as were her German,French and Italian. To my questions about Northern Italy and the scenery we passed she answered in mono-syllables, and in the evening after we had checked into our separate hotel rooms in Portofino we consumed our dinner at Taverna del Marinaio on the main square, Piazza Martin dell'Olivetta,in total silence after I had finally given up engaging her in conversation.

Even our supper of raw smoked ham - - prosciutto - - didn't appeal to me after I had heard so many raves about it, and all I could get out of Myrtil that evening amounted to that odd confession on how she had tried to commit suicide a year or two earlier after her failure with Michelangeli. Since that rejection, around 1954,she had not touched a piano.(In fact, in the five years I had known her in New York, I had never heard her stroke the keys of a Steinway,Baldwin,Blüthner or Bechstein anywhere.)

Nevertheless, I could not fathom how a person who had been so chatty and cordial in her correspondence with me over the past couple of years now turned out to be a toally uncommunicative woman who declined to have me engage her in conversation.

Even the morning,following my arrival in Genoa, when I waited for her downstairs around 8 a.m. for breakfast, Myrtil did not show up until three hours later. Naturally I did not want to start breakfast without her and could do nothing but pace up and down that hot July

morning in 1956 in front of our hotel so as not to miss her when she deigned to finally make her appearance. Her attitude now puzzled and disturbed me immensely. Here I had come more than three thousand miles to confront nothing but a beautiful mute.

When she finally did show up for breakfast, there was no word of apology or explanation as to her tardiness because we really had agreed the previous night to meet outside between eight and nine in the morning. After a silent breakfast, she took me for a spin in her red Fiat-Spider, which she had named Wotan and truly turned out to be a beautifully designed sports car, and we coasted along the breathtakingly lovely northern Italian coast on the Gulf of Genoa until we reached the nearby bathing resort of Santa Margherita. I brought up my darling mother's first name, Margarete, to her, but her silent treatment of me continued, and at a small village, Riva Trigosa, she suggested that we go for a swim in the bay called Riviera di Levante. We changed in some tiny beach cabins and when I decided to join her for a swim in the ocean, Myrtil suggested that one of us keep an eye on our belongings while the other partner take a dip in the water. Ladies first, I decided, and Myrtil disappeared in the crowded sea for about two hours. In fact, I wasn't sure whether she had taken leave of me, drowned or was just enjoying herself in the Mediterranean. Finally, though, she made her appearance again and it was my turn to dive into the water.

I have never been a great friend of physical exercise since leaving school in 1940, in particular of swimming, and after half an hour or so I returned to her side on the hot beach. However, it became a futile exercise on my part to engage her once more in conversation; she simply enjoyed being roasted by the Italian summer sun more than my company.

Not surprisingly, I had my doubts about wanting to stay in

Europe under those almost hostile conditions and seriously considered returning to the U.S. and my sister, if this rude behavior on her part continued for the next few days. And yet, I did want at least to enjoy the breathtaking beauty of the Italian Riviera since I had no way of knowing whether another opportunity to do so would ever again avail itself to me in the future.

We did stay that night in Santa Margherita and I had the same pleasure of whiling away about three hours in the vicinity of our hotel until Myrtil made her appearance for breakfast the following morning. This time she informed me that we would pick up a neighborhood girlfriend of hers, Milena, who was holidaying in nearby Chiavari.

Milena turned out out to be a genuine Italian blonde, a rarity, with the face and figure of a budding Hollywood starlet. In her attitude toward me,however, she turned out to be exactly the opposite of Myrtil: chatty, charming, with a sunny disposition,to boot. The only trouble was that Milena did not speak a single word of English, French or German; only Italian, but the difference between her friendly behavior and Myrtil's stoic attitude was so far apart that I even welcomed Milena's unintelligible conversations with me.

While Myrtil was driving her "Wotan" through the ravishingly gorgeous Italian Riviera, Milena sat in the middle of the two-seater, and I next to her. What appealed to me especially after this two-day ostracism was Milena's sensual closeness to me in the Fiat. She was wearing a pair of hot tight pants and, deliberately or not, pressed her bare elbow in the tight seating arrangement between my thighs.

To Milena's amusement I had come prepared to Italy with a pocket-book edition of Langenscheidt's Italian-English,English-Italian dictionary. Throughout this latest automobile trip,on which

Myrtil took us this time along the resplendent northern Italian coast, past Savona, Alassio, San Remo, Ventimiglia, Monacco and Cannes, our sputtering conversation became increasingly animated and we bought sandwiches and soft drinks, relaxing in ancient villages with dark,narrow,cobbled streets, where we consumed our fruits and cold cuts. Although we did not gamble in Monacco, I do remember a postcard stuck to a dark-green bulletin-board in the casino addressed to Somerset Maugham,who liked to frequent the gaming house. To the amusement of the two young ladies, I then proceeded to add my own mame under the sender's signature and often wondered what Mr.Maugham had finally made of my signature, wondering perhaps on what occasion he had met Paul Kuttner.

Moreover, at that stage of happenings, Myrtil began to enjoy her role of playing the interpreter between Milena and me, and in the course of these bilingual conversations she started to add her own opinions and observations to the subject matter Milena and I were trying to discuss. My Langenscheidt suddenly was no longer needed.

After a day or two of this odd automobile sojourn, Myrtil's attitude toward me began to change ever so slightly: in order to compete with Milena monopolizing my full attention, she herself became chattier and chattier by the mile, almost by the minute, trying to engage me in her net of conversational seduction as well, and after a few hours of this strange verbal exchange, she suddenly declined to continue translating Milena's Italian for me and started to address me almost non-stop in English, a tactic Milena did not realize or comprehend,still being under the impression that Myrtil actually was doing nothing else than to translate her Italian for my benefit.

Thus,by the time we finally made our way to Myrtil's and Milena's home town of Como near the Swiss border village of Chiasso,the three

of us had become a strange but merry trio of lingual handicappers.

Oddly enough, Milena dropped out of the race once we reached Como, meaning that Myrtil and I had the "romantic field" to ourselves.

Of special mention should be the mother of Myrtil, the Hamburg-born Irmgard Riemenschneider, who truly made me feel welcome in their lovely cool three-story house on via Bellinzona. Myrtil's father, a more taciturn,heavy-set, but pleasant-looking Swiss-born Italian, was the owner of Northern Italy's largest tar-paper factory, and her two brothers, Ciccio and Enrico, were too much involved in their school studies to pay much attention to me or their sister.

Still, their hearty welcome of me and the bedroom they put at my disposal, were so overwhelming in graciousness and beauty, it almost brought tears to my eyes. In fact, the window in my room was overlooking one of Europe's most romantic lakes, Lago di Como, and I often sat at the huge mahogany desk there for hours in the evening looking out over the tops of the pini marittimi firtrees at the not too distant brilliantly lit nocturnal waters of the lake, with the town's illuminated funicular railway going steeply uphill.

Now I saw Myrtil as the person she was: a truly beautiful, young, dark-haired woman whose doe-shaped eyes had often been compared to Sophia Loren's,and it took no effort on my part to really fall in love with this sweet-natured,loving,intelligent woman.

Over the following weeks we traveled exhaustively in her Fiat through most of Western Europe:Northern Italy,France,Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Spain. Needless to say, we became inseparable, much to the delight of Myrtil's mother. We wanted to get married, but couldn't do so in Italy, where the Roman Catholic church outrightly forbade the marriage of Catholics to members of

other faiths, except in the rarest of cases at that time. Painful as this edict turned out to be, at no time in the last hundred years did the Catholic Church ever resort to the barbarism of the Muslims who, for example, considered the bombing of Afghanistan's extremist strongholds during the month of Ramadan 2001 a sacrilege against the world's Muslims, but who had no compunction about launching their own Yom Kippur War in 1973 on the holiest day of the Israelis...and during their own Ramadan season. As long as the Muslims set the date for war, even on their own holiest day, it was a cause for celebration by the followers of Islam, but these same disciples of Mohammed claim that ninety percent of the world's population - the "infidels" - have no right to fight back or continue their own offensive on a Muslim holiday.

Religion had already caused the decimation of my own family in the 1940s, and now, in the twenty-first century, another religious extremist group wants to slaughter the rest of the world in the name of Allah.

My sister Annemarie had suffered enough grievous wounds in the name of religion and race in Nazi Germany, yet now, in the summer of 1956, she set about in New York providing me with a religious certificate demanded by the Swiss authorities neighboring Italy, so that Myrtil and I could finally obtain a valid marriage license there at the ancient Swiss-Italian townhall of Mendrisio and thus validate officially our marriage vows.

Myrtil, who was a totally non-practicing Roman Catholic, in fact an agnostic, decided against a church wedding after the civil ceremony, and we enjoyed a most sumptuous wedding reception at the Villa Romantica overlooking nearby Lake Lugano, attended by all of Myrtil's friends and relatives.A few hours later, we embarked in Myrtil's "Wotan" on our honeymoon trip through Western Europe.

Of course, we visited the tomb of the Italian poet D'Annunzio at Gardone on the Garda Lake and also San Viglio where Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh frequently stayed. But after my six years of living under Europe's most cruel dictatorship in Nazi Germany until 1939, I did feel a bit squeamish and apprehensive about my entry into Fascist Franco Spain, where we proceeded with Myrtil's sports car from France's bordertown Perpignan.

At first we stayed at Barcelona's Ritz, a dignified old hotel. The desk clerk there, who spoke English, asked us to pay 250 pesos per night, but I told him that as an American citizen I was not used to pay more than 160 pesos and in ten seconds flat he caved in and let us have our room for my suggested amount. Myrtil and I were so happy about this easy financial triumph that we celebrated by making love there in the late afternoon, then topped this off with a grandiose meal of paella Valenciennia. The odd thing about Franco Spain to a refugee from Nazi Germany like me was that we saw virtually no public display of Fascism anywhere throughout our stay in that beautiful country, regardless of whether we travelled through its truly impoverished villages or viewed such magnificent historical towns as Salamanca, Burgos with its gorgeous cathedral, Pomplona, which Hemingway loved so much, and Madrid, where a Franco-hating taxi driver guided our Fiat bumper to buumper to the Hotel San Francisco, so that I, as an American citizen, would feel a bit more at home there. Of course, we paid a visit to the Prado with its superb Spanish paintings, although a peeve complaint of mine at the time turned out to be the constant squeaky creak of the wooden floorboards in the museum, which deflected my attention partly from the full enjoyment of the masterpieces on exhibit.

Those floorboards had a great deal in common with Spain's high-

ways, or rather its roads, because they happened to be in such a state of disrepair that Myrtil's Fiat had trouble navigating them or reaching any speed higher than 45 miles per hour. We were literally afraid of those potholes and the cobblestoned roads, fearing the car's axle would break or get damaged, and both of us could only thank the Lord that, finally, we did make it safely out of this Fascist country, breathtakingly lovely as its scenery turned out to be in many respects and uncommonly pleasant as its citizens were. Fortunately Myrtil's perfect command of Italian helped her tremendously throughout our stay in Spain to swim through the similar lingual waters of those two languages, but even her ability to express herself in Italian to the Spaniards at large did not save us from one unpleasant experience when we had our last supper on Spanish soil in San Sebastian, a truly lovely town, and arrived at a pleasant-looking outdoor restaurant at around 6:30 p.m. for dinner.

We ordered from the menu and were assured by the waiter time and again that the meal would be served in a matter of minutes. By eight o'clock no meal had arrived at our table and no other customer, except for us, was visible on the premises. Our stomachs were churning and grumbling angrily with the pangs of hunger as we viewed the avenue, the Ramblas, where the restaurant happened to be located and the town's people took their constitutional after a day's work. This charming avenue sported double rows of pine trees of Mediterranean along its spacious sidewalk and an interesting array of stalls, where flowers, birds, shirts and vegetable were sold. We had already seen Barcelona's huge elaborate church of the Holy Family, which was designed by Antonio Gaudi, and wanted like hell to finally get out of Fascist Spain.

Gradually the restaurant began to fill up around 9 p.m. and it was not until 10 at night that our dinner arrived, by which time we

were so weak, discouraged and famished that we thanked the waiter profusely for his goodness in finally taking pity on us and serving the meal. However, Myrtil and I became so incensed after the delicious food had strengthened our bodies and resolve that we did not leave even a single peseta tip for the guy who had strung us along, knowing fully well that our dinner would not be served for another four hours and kept the hated "gringos" waiting and waiting. Happy with avenging ourselves in a manner to inflict financial pain on that monstrous waiter, we shuffled along to walk off the meal in the mild maritime air for a good hour or two, then walked to the beach and took a nude dip in the deserted Atlantic under a full romantic moon. Moreover, we decided against returning to the hotel that night since the unyieldingly hard mattress there in our doublebed had, to boot, such a deep hollow in the middle of it that it would have been impossible for us to get a wink's sleep. Instead, we rested up on the deserted moonlit beach, and after paying our hotel bill the next morning proceeded at around six o'clock to luxurious Biarritz in the south of France.

While France must be one of the world's most beautiful countries, Myrtil and I never got the impression of being welcome there as tourists. The French merely seemed to tolerate our presence as we travelled from Biarritz north toward Psris past Bayonne, Tours and Orléans. Some of the Roman ruins surviving for the past two thousand years near Tours impressed us enormously, especially when we sat on the same stone slabs high up overlooking a Coliseum-like arena that may have been host to Caesar, although he did not mention such a visit in his De Bello Gallico.

Finally, though, disaster struck! Myrtil's elegant Fiat had succumbed to the previous week's coarse Spanish roads and broke down a few miles outside Orléans. Catastrophe! Fortunately we could

hitch a hike back to Orléans after an Englishman mercifully stopped for us, and it was there that we got hold of an auto-repair service. That mechanic picked up our broken-down car, but he told us immediately that he would have to send for a spare part of the damaged engine from Turin, where the closest Fiat factory was located. That may cost us at least a week's delay, he explained to us, and a pretty penny to boot.

We simply had to accept the inevitable and with a heavy heart departed by train for Paris. When we arrived there half an hour before midnight, it was pouring with rain. All the restaurants were closed. We were total strangers there and every hotel was fully booked because of a number of conventions taking place in Paris that week. Both of us felt like bursting into tears, being stranded with our suitcases, hungry and soaking wet, in a city we were not familiar with and (, worst of all, With) nowhere to spend the night.

Only around two o'clock in the morning did we find a tiny room smelling of astringent cheap soap in a flea-bitten hotel in Paris' Montmartre district, but we were told by the unamused landlady to vacate the premises by seven in the morning since our room had been booked for that time.

After being served lukewarm coffee and a dry croissant for breakfast, Myrtil and I decided to visit the U.S. and Swiss (our nationalities) consulates to find out how we could best survive in what appeared to us to be a hostile city. Fate would have it, however, that, to really rub it in, that day happened to be the beginning of a weekend, with all the consulates in Paris being closed. With our suitcases and rain-soaked clothing, we then proceeded by train to Versailles and confronted there the same calamity: every hotel and boardinghbuse was booked up. With a heavy heart we next boarded a train heading for Orléans and finally settled there in the Hotel Terminus, overlooking part of a large square with the inevitable

statue of the Maid of Orléans.

Resting up and feeling a bit more optimistic now, Myrtil had to call her mother in Como with the sad news of our predicament and ask her for additional funds, not only for our enforced upkeep but also for the not inconsiderable repair service of "Wotan."

The money arrived overnight and we travelled almost every day by train to the French capital to see the usual sights: eating in outdoor restaurants on the Champs Elysées, visiting the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre, Versailles, Fontainebleau and all the other obligatory landmarks in or near Paris, which impressed both of us immensely.

But finally, after a week of waiting, we received a call from the Fiat repair service, which we had informed of our address and phone number, that "Wotan" was well and happy again and we resumed our honeymoon, crossing into Germany and driving down south to the overwhelmingly breathtaking Black Forest. Here we stayed for a couple of days overlooking the romantic Titi Lake (actually this being my first trip to Germany since leaving it in 1939), and then we went on to Freiburg and the equally stunning Lake of Constance, where not too far away we celebrated our reborn luck with the finest meal I had ever been dished up: roast venison with roasted chestnuts and buttery asparagus tips in a rustic restaurant called Die Kittenmühle at Erlenbach.

Finally we made our way into Switzerland to visit Myrtil's paternal grandmother, who was feared and loved by the whole family for her no-nonsense approach to life, although she was already well in her eighties.

She lived in a lovely little, immaculately clean apartment just outside Winterthur near Zurich, and after Myrtil had introduced me to the old lady and she questioned me about my life, she referred to all Germans as a lot of cultured barbarians, a verdict

with which I could not disagree altogether so soon after the end of World War II.

Oddly enough, I liked old Mrs. Romegialli a lot, her honesty and hospitality, and when she invited us after dinner to play Scrabbles with her, we accepted graciously, although in retrospect I made the mistake of beating her [illegible] by a few points; a short-lived triumph, however, that she did not accept and appreciate at all by insisting that we play another game - - something Myrtil did not take much delight in on her part.

This time I made up my mind to overlook a few openings that might have given me a few additional points, but then I noticed that the dear old lady began to invent words that did not exist in any language in order to win overwhelmingly the second game, and this time it was Myrtil who strenuously objected, referring to the Scrabble vocabulary booklet in order to point out to her grandmother that some of the old lady's words were not listed in the Scrabble booklet and the book of rules. Evidently one cannot use words of more than one language during the course of one game. This criticism infuriated old Mrs. Romegialli no end, and when I whispered to Myrtil in English to let her grandmother win, she challenged me to translate my whisper to her. Myrtil's graceful smile and observation that I agreed with Mrs. Romegialli finally placated her enough to calm her ruffled temper. Immediately she pronounced me as cultured and not a barbarian, and our stay with her ended on a pleasant note.

A few days later we returned to the new house Myrtil's father was building for his family in a large vineyard in Grezzi, overlooking the Bondone mountain range outside Trento and we stayed there for a few days before driving back to Como. From here I returned on the 10th of November 1956 to the U.S. onboard of the "Bianca-mano," seeing my beloved sister Annemarie and her wonderful husband

Joe again, and a day or two later I resumed my job as a sales rep at the Watson-Guptil art-publishing house on 40th Street, overlooking the south side of the Fifth Avenue public library.

Myrtil joined me about a month later in the U.S., spending the first few weeks in this country during the day with my sister, who lived nearby on 87th Street a few steps from Riverside Drive, and already a month or two later, after getting accustomed to her new surroundings, Myrtil found a job at the main office of the make-up company Charles of the Ritz, not too far from Central Park.

Few things at this matrimonial juncture made me happier than to realize that Myrtil, Annemarie and Joe hit it off so well from the word "Go." Both Myrtil and Annemarie were blessed with the innate gift of making friends with anybody in no time and since we lived just a few blocks apart in Manhattan and Annemarie had become a fulltime housewife, she took it upon herself to prepare weekday dinners for all four of us at her apartment.

This social arrangement became even more permanent when all of us decided to move to a quieter New York neighborhood, and already a few weeks later, in February 1957, a real estate agent in Queens showed us a spacious three-room apartment at ninety dollars per month in Jackson Heights, just three blocks from the Number 7 Flushing subway line. I paid two months' security and Joe asked Mr. Johnson, the super of this apartment complex, if there was another apartment available in the same project. As luck would have it (in the scarce housing market) Mr. Johnson said that he had just been informed that another party was vacating their two-and-a-half room apartment next door to ours. Within five minutes Joe and Annemarie signed their lease as well and followed us to Jackson Heights in May, acquiring soon thereafter their overly friendly, lovable dog Rusty, a mongrelly mixture of a dozen different breeds.

Myrtil and I spent most of the dowry from her parents on the furniture for our new apartment under the watchful eye of an interior decorator, Mr. Nesselroth,who had been recommended to us by friends. And when it came to elegance and comfort, our living conditions could hardly have been improved. Personally I was opposed to spending so much on our spectacular creature comforts, which to me at least seemed exorbitant, but it was the money Myrtil had brought into the marriage, and in the end I was equally proud to show off our luxurious living quarters to friends and neighbors alike.

Only on one occasion,regarding the interior decoration,did we come to a real fight. Of all the places, it happened to be an object in the bathroom: the shower curtain. Myrtil, without my knowledge, had ordered a custom-made,heavy-duty shower curtain, costing us not the usual four or five dollars but a strapping one hundred and twenty-five dollars. In fact, I didn't even know that she and Mr.Nesselroth had arranged to acquire and prepare this custom-tailored furnishing, nor did I know, until later, what Myrtil was willing to dish out for it. But when I came home from work one night and entered our bathroom to wash my hands, I literally was repelled by the sight confronting me.

Facing me was a fully-drawn coal-black shower curtain with a top fringe of a white 12-inch collar. To me it seemed as though I was actually entering a dimly-lit cathedral,not a bathroom, a rather dour, even tasteless combination for a room to wash and relieve oneself. I told Myrtil point-blank that I hated,not disliked, but literally loathed this Vaticanish decoration,which might be a perfect backdrop for a confessional but not a place to empty one's bladder and bowels. Nevertheless, since this strange contraption had been specially custom-tailored to Myrtil's specifications, Mr.Nesselroth

later,understandably,refused to take it back. And when I read the amount owed on the bill, a fierce heartfelt screaming match ensued, which really proved to be a futile attempt on my part since Myrtil had already paid part of the bill,which Mr.Nesselroth would not refund, and which actually happened to amount to more than a month's rent for our apartment.

On another occasion, in 1958, Myrtil and I were supposed to meet one weekday evening at six p.m. in front of the old New York Metropolitan Opera House on Broadway and 40th Street, not too far from my place of employment, and proceed from there to some other location nearby for an evening's entertainment. I arrived at our meeting place about ten minutes early and waited and waited for her for close to two hours. Finally, around eight p.m. I gave up and returned home by subway, hungry, angry and puzzled. What then met my eyes on entering our brightly lit apartment literally took my breath away. The diningroom carpet and kitchen were strewn with snippets of one of Myrtil's original Dior dresses that she had acquired in Paris before joining me in the U.S.. I stormed, confused and upset, into our bedroom where I could hear the sounds of a woman crying and sniffling. And there she lay in her slip on her bed, dissolved in tears,heartbroken,desolate,her body convulsed and shuddering with a paroysm of non-stop sobs.--a picture of total puzzlement as far as I was concerned. I was wronged and she was crying! On seeing me enter, she leaped from the bed and screamed that I had deserted her and not paid heed to our date. I assured her that I did and had waited for her for two hours and demanded to know where she had been and why she had destroyed a four-hundred-dollar Dior dress. Because she was desperate and unhappy,she yelled at me,hiccupping with sobs. She had bought the dress to please me two years earlier and now that she had worn it

for the first time in New York,I had deserted her.

Gradually,though, as we began to calm down a bit, it developed that we had been waiting for each other at two different locations, because she insisted that we had set the evening date to meet in front of Carnegie Hall rather than the old Met. Of course, there never materialzed any proof of which one of us happened to be the party that was in the right, yet somehow this quarrel seemed to leave a permanent rift in our relationship.

But while Myrtil and I were married, we did have an active social life with friends and co-workers and especially with my sister and her husband. On Sunday mornings, we two often went to visit an old lady in Greenwich Village, who gave us some highly instructive lessons in oil painting, and both Myrtil and I proudly presented friends of ours with these land- and cityscapes, still-lives and floral paintings. In fact, we were so proud of these 26"x20" oils that I took color slides of each one of these pictures, all told around forty of them, some of which still hang to this day in my apartment. Unfortunately,my second wife considered them inferior and, behind my back, threw the rest of them out one day with the garbage, as she later admitted to me.

But while Myrtil and I were still married, she would also make the most exquisite dresses for herself from patterns she had bought at a nearby notions store, Ackermann's, on Roosevelt Avenue and 82nd Street, or she'd spend a couple of hours most nights with Annemarie while Joe studied his IBM technical books and I had retired to our apartment next door to work on my first novel.

The only trouble was that after devoting myself for almost three years at night to that manuscript,not a single literary agent or publisher was interested in handling or buying my opus. The waiting period of about two months for the manuscript to be re-

jected and returned to me took its toll and, worse, on my relationship with Myrtil. I became increasingly moody, morose, despondent, and lost interest in my relationship with my wonderful, good-natured wife.

Naturally, after years of failure, trying to write and rewrite my novel, then finding myself hitting a stonewall in seeing it rejected again and again, none of it did anything to improve the situation. Our relationship suffered beyond the state where our love could be resuscitated or repaired. My depression and disillusionment in seeing my strenuous literary efforts rebuffed over and over resulted in my incapacity at long last even to fulfill my role as a lover, and not even my sister's words of encouragement, nor finally her secret warning to me that my marital status was being endangered by my misplaced literary ambition and that I should pay more attention to Myrtil rather than to my work, had any effect on me. I was stubbornly and stupidly obsessed by the lure of success or at least of recognition in being put in print, that in the end the marriage collapsed and Myrtil finally took leave of me to my eternal regret.

A couple of weeks after her departure, her mother arrived unexpectedly in my apartment from Italy. She insisted on picking up the original paintings of their Italian friend Molteni as well as virtually all of the furniture for which Myrtil had paid with her father's dowry - - something I released to the astonishment of Signora Romegialli without so much as a moment's hesitation, and something, incidentally, Myrtil could have obtained without her mother's expenditure of traveling to the U.S. I never heard from Myrtil again, although I was informed that she had married again a year or so later. A month following our breakup, I moved into a one-room studio at the same address, glad to be able at least to remain close to my sister Annemarie and her husband Joe.

HOW NELSON ROCKEFELLER GOT ME INTO HOT WATER. (1958)

While Myrtil, my wife, was kept pretty busy as a trainee beautician at the New York headquarters of Charles of the Ritz, I was fortunate to be able to resume my job, after returning from Europe, as the New York book sales representative at Watson-Guptill, America's only how-to fine-arts publishing house with its monthly magazine "American Artist."

At my office I made friends with my co-workers in no time, especially with two elderly ladies - spinsters both of them - the very able bookkeepers Bea Nordstrom and Pauline Kirk, and with our boss, Dick Hubbard, who frequently invited all of us, including Myrtil, on Sundays to his home, a lovely, old-fashioned house near Yonkers; and here his wife spoiled us with the most delicious dishes in the garden under their old gnarled apple trees.

Fortunately, at that time New York City sported quite a few art-supply stores that loved to buy our how-to art books, especially Arthur Brown, A.I. Friedman, and my own favorite, Lee's Art Shop, on 57th Street, but I always had to make appointments at Scribner's, where the regal Igor Kropotkin reigned supreme in his black Savile Row outfit on the second-floor balcony and never uttered a single word when I tried to introduce him to our new line of books at least twice a month, although he studied each illustration in our books most carefully and then placed generous oders for his store.

Next, there turned out to be the charming and most capable Elsie Lichtenstein, the head-buyer at Barnes & Noble on Fifth Avenue. Of course, in almost half- a-century Barnes & Noble has meanwhile become a behemoth among book publishers and bookstores all over the U.S. and once even, without my knowledge, B&N had published, in 1994, my own Henry Holt paperback "Science's Trickiest Questions" as a hardcover. But in 1954 Elsie's store, I seem to recall, really hap-

pened to be the only Barnes & Noble bookstore anywhere, and Elsie always suffered from the most terrible adenoids, which clogged up her nose to such an extent that sometimes she could hardly speak while trying to pepper me with questions about the contents of the books I tried to sell her store. Yet her charm and kindness, besides her knowledge of books and her astute intelligence, gradually helped to make Barnes & Noble one of the leading bookstores in the United States. With Doubleday near St. Patrick's Cathedral on Fifth Avenue I also had pretty good luck since the buyers there simultaneously placed orders for a number of its branches around the country.

The problem with selling larger quantities of our books could be traced to the similarity in subject matter: one could only publish and sell a limited number of titles in the fields of oil, gouache and watercolor painting, or sketching with a pencil or charcoal, although Watson-Guptill hit on the idea of publishing separate books on how to draw, paint or sketch such subjects as profiles, nudes, anatomy, trees, landscapes, still lives, flowers, buildings, animals as wedl as books dealing with nature, such as rivers,, brooks, lakes, oceans, beaches, and then breaking even these subjects down individually as, for instance, how to paint ~~each subject in oil or in water, or books dealing with painting~~ urban scenes and forests at dusk, in the early morning, in rain or fog, or during blizzards, or how to paint fruit and vegetable in outdoor and indoor settings. The subject matter was unlimited and each topic could be expanded into hefty volumes, showing the various methods step by step and stage by stage, from the opening lines to the finished product, expanding and embellishing each subject matter from all sides, with special pictorial attention being paid to matters on how not to register a special effect on paper or canvas, and even the renowned pencil-

sketch artist Ernest Watson, who lent his name to the company's logo, was represented in those books by his masterful step-by-step urban and nature renditions.

Since New York City at that time had an unlimited number of book and art-supply stores, I could choose these shops at random for the most part and always come back in the late afternoons with quite a few book orders or promises (usually kept) in sending in such orders by mail.

But during one reasonably warm and sunny November day in 1958, after I had made a good sale at Brentano's on Fifth Avenue and 58th Street, I felt rather fatigued and retired to Central Park at 60th Street, resting my tired bones on one of the benches there to read my New York Times. I always carried it around with me in the briefcase that was filled to bursting with the latest Watson-Guptill art titles. That briefcase mostly weighed between 15 and 20 pounds, and on those occasions I considered it a pleasure to rest up somewhere for lunch, especially at that Central Park location, where spring, summer and fall hundreds of people could relax on its benches that stretched end-to-end for a good two hundred yards into the park.

And so I took advantage of this gorgeous, mild autumn day on November 5, 1958, resting my 36-year-old bones, tired from schlepping the heavy book-laden briefcase in my sweaty, weal-covered hands for a good three hours already. Dozens of pigeons fluttered excitedly from person to person hoping for a few generous crumbs of the lunch crowd, which for the most part had filled the park benches already when I arrived from my Brentano book sale.

Myrtil had prepared some liverwurst sandwiches for me and I had just finished wolfing them down, starved as I happened to be, and thrown the wrapping in a nearby litterbasket when I became aware of a pretty large crowd approaching me. To my surprise

the center of attraction in that crowd was none other than the newly elected governor of New York state,Nelson Rockefeller.

He sat down in the very place I had just vacated, surrounded by at least a dozen reporters, including the TV newsman Gabe Pressman, who was actually interviewing him and holding the mike inches under Rockefeller's nose. Positioning myself about eight to ten yards from the governor, I could not hear exactly the words that were being exchanged between him and Pressman, but I was aware of the army of cameramen exploding their flashbulbs as they took picture after picture of the two on the park bench.

When I got back to my office later that afternoon,I could not afford to tell my co-workers and bosses that I had seen the new governor in Central Park, because I was not even supposed to be anywhere near there, selling books instead for my company.

However, much to my surprise I was called into the office of the owner of Watson-Guptill, Leighton Guptill, early next morning, shortly after my arrival at nine o'clock, and to my further astonishment, which almost bordered on shock, I found myself confronted as well by Mr. Hubbard,the office manager, and also by Mr.Watson the renowned pencil-sketching artist, and Norman Kent, the editor-in-chief of Watson-Guptill books and its magazine "American Artist," which it also was my duty to sell to newspaper kiosks in the city.

Point-blank, Mr. Kent questioned me about my assignments the day before. I was flabberghasted to face all these top executives over such a trifling matter,which I had already conveyed to Mr. Hubbard the afternoon before, and I told them that I had had a fruitful meeting and sales conference with the head-buyer at Brentano's and then attempted to sell our books and the magazine to a few more stores but unfortunately failed to make any additional sales that day,although I had been promised by the art-supply store

A.I. Friedman that a written purchase order for our books would follow in the mail.

Norman Kent proceeded to ask me whether instead of selling our books I also took the liberty of actually resting up in Central Park. Gallons of adrenalin roared into my heart and I could feel it pound maniacally against my ribcage that I almost feared they could see the heartbeat knocking against my shirt. However, I immediately denied being anywhere near Central Park the day before but had simply done my duty trying to sell books and the magazine in a number of stores.

At any rate, now it was my turn to find out why I was suddenly being crossexamined about a chore that I had performed satisfactorily every day for at least three years already.

"Because of this picture," Norman Kent said, lifting a copy of the New York Herald Tribune from Mr. Guptill's desk and pushing it under my nose as if it were a piece of evidence, nailing me as the culprit in a murder case.

I stared at the newspaper issue of Thursday, November 6, 1958 and at first only looked at the headlines that proclaimed Pope John XXIII announcing his Papal goals and New York Governor Rockefeller proclaiming that he was not interested at present in the 1960 presidential race. I could not understand what I personally had to do with these communiques, and it was at this point that Mr.Hubbard,the business manager, asked me to take a look at the big photo centering the top of the daily's front page.

And my heart stopped beating - - then banged furiously against my ribcage as though attempting to make up for the lost beat and burst out. But there I stood, being plainly visible in the photo just about 8 yards from Mr.Rockefeller, with about two dozen onlookers,camera-men and reporters watching the interview with Gabe Pressman on the

park bench, the fifth man from the right.

Now I was cornered. I could not deny the pictorial evidence. There it was: my coat,my shirt,my tie, and most important my face!

Why was I in the park when I was supposed to be in the stores selling books? What proof did I have that I did not rest in the park every day when I was supposed to be out selling books and the magazine?

I knew I was on the spot and simply said that they had to believe me,because I could not provide any factual evidence to corroborate my statement that this was an exception,but that I sometimes went to Central Park during lunchtime when my professional duties as a book salesman happened to take place in stores near the park.

Guptill,Watson,Kent,and Hubbard asked me to wait outside Mr.Guptill's office since they wanted to discuss what to do with me as they did not know whether they could ever trust me again with my time outside the office.

I waited for about half an hour which, unsurprisingly, seemed like an eternity to me because I realized that they had the right to fire me. That would prove to be a catastrophe for my wife and me since we were making only just enough money together to cover our most basic needs and could not save more than ten or twenty dollars a week, certainly not enough to take care of our rent,the food and other necessities in case my employment would be terminated. I knew that Annemarie,my sister, and her husband Joe would try to help us out financially, but I was determined never to bother these two wonderful people for any pecuniary assistance, realizing that Joe just made enough to sustain their own modest lifestyle.

When I was called back into Leighton Guptill's office, I was confronted by four grimly severe faces and Mr.Kent announced that

they had decided to give me another chance but no longer as the New York salesman of their books and magazine; [illegible] only as a bookkeeper in Ms.Nordstrom's office and that she would train me in that field of debits and credits.

A heavy load fell off my shoulders and I promised the quartet that I would not disappoint them and be happy to learn the accounting trade.

Moreover, Mr. Kent then proclaimed in a disapproving tone of voice that there would be no raise for me that coming Christmas as further punishment, and no bonus.

This latter coolly rendered message,however, came as a great blow to me since Myrtil and I were making so little salary that we could in no way improve our financial situation and barely had enough money to even go on vacation. I pleaded with the executives that our monetary position was so deplorable that as little as a ten-dollar raise per week would help us to put at least that amount in our savings account once a month, but Mr.Kent remained adamant about their joint decision and refused to budge.

With a heavy heart I reported this news to Myrtil that night, who for her turn appeared to be uncustomarily ill at ease, even before I conferred this monetary blow to her. The mystery of her discomfort,however,came into the open when I entered the bathroom a few minutes later to wash up before dinner and found an unnecessarily brandnew shower curtain in it, although we had only recently bought a cheerfully pink bathroom drape to match the color of the tiles.

I stood there transfixed and could not trust my eyes. These plastic curtains stared at me back,pitch-black, with a separate top fringe of white. First of all, the ebony drapes darkened the entire bathroom in spite of the bright electric light over the sink, and secondly its resulting gloominess gave me the impression of

entering a solitary private niche in a cathedral at night.

(This episode and its consequences have been described already in more detail in the previous chapter.)

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That week as a whole proved to be dreadful for me. First, the way I had been treated by my bosses; then the prospect of no raise for the entire next year, and,to top it,having to shower daily in a bathtub bordered by America's ugliest and most expensive shower curtain.

Usually I had made it a rule to shower every other day, except during those sweaty summer days, but in order to take advantage of the enormous outlay of our money for those ridiculous curtains, I now went to the other extreme and showered every morning and every night, hoping that the constant usage of water on these curtains would somehow succeed in destroying the drapes' hardy plastic material. But to no avail. They outlasted our marriage, and probably Myrtil's second marriage,too, even if it should last for seventy-five years.

And yet,that year's yuletide - - in spite of Mr.Kent's and Mr. Guptill's threat that I would not receive a raise for the following year because of my one-time failure to beat the pavement eight hours a day selling art-books - - I ended up with a twenty-five-dollar raise in my weekly salary, something so astronomical for the 1950s that I could not trust my eyes. I felt like asking Mr.Hubbard, the business manager, why I had received such an enormous financial boost after the bosses' threat that my weekly wages would not be enlarged next year, but in the end I decided against looking a gift horse in the mouth and just offered my profoundly heartfelt thanks to the four bosses.

However, it proved to be Mr.Hubbard himself who advanced an explanation to me a day later for this most welcome financial increase.

The bosses had second thoughts about their strict disciplinarian reprimand of me and, in fact, had proudly displayed the Herald Tribune front-page to friends,customers and business associate

alike since all four of them happened to be diehard Republicans.

Finally, though, Watson-Guptill planned on transferring most of their office personnel to the Midwest (but they returned several years later to New York) and the American Artist's helpful advertising manager, Cy Ellison, wrote a great reference about me to David A. Boehm, the president of Sterling Publishing Company, who hired me on the spot, and it was here that I stayed for the next thirty-four years, most of them as publicity director of the U.S. The Guinness Book of World Records.

LETTERS FROM THE STARS AND OTHER MORTALS. (1960)

One of the few things I regret most in life is that I had always made it a point to destroy those communications from my loved ones, in particular my mother, that I had received from them after my arrival in England in 1939. It never occurred to me that I would never see them again.

Between the time I left Nazi Germany in February 1939 and the outbreak of World War II seven months later, I must have received two dozen letters from my adorable mother and sister. The stroke my father had suffered three years previous to my departure from Berlin had almost completely incapacitated and paralyzed him, mentally and physically, meaning that he could not answer my letters, although my sister who still visited him occasionally (and his second wife Ida) did keep me posted about his sad inactive life.

But until late in August 1939 I was pretty sure that in a matter of months my mother and sister would be able to follow me to a more secure haven in England. Fate, however, determined that I'd never see my wonderful mother, the greatest love of my life, again when I learned soon after World war II that she had been murdered by the Nazis in the last gassing operation in Auschwitz-Birkenau in November 1944.

The love she felt for me permeated all her letters; what I particularly treasured was her thoughtfulness in sprinkling her letters to me with Eau de Cologne 4711, the only perfume I have ever loved for its pungent freshness. Even today, over six decades later, tears come to my eyes when somebody in my proximity wears this rejuvenating fragrance, reminding me instantly of my mother.

And so today, all I have left now are letters, not from my

loved ones or even pre-WWII my friends, but from some luminaries, who once happened to be household names and now are mostly forgotten or totally unknown to the new generation.

Quite recently, for example, I come across a most grateful letter from the first female lead singer of Gian Carlo Menotti's "The Consul," which I still consider the finest, most hypnotically melodic opera composed after World War II. I was captivated by the singer's artistry, yet never heard of her again: Vera Bryner. Shortly after my congratulatory letter to her, she answered me on March 23, 1950: "I deeply appreciated your beautiful letter. It gave me a lot of courage and comfort. Frankly, I don't find the words to express to you all my gratitude for your encouragement and kindness, which any young artist in my condition needs so badly."

Naturally, I also congratulated the then little-known composer on his opus and he thanked me for my letter the same year on April 13, informing me that he was making plans to perform his opera in Europe, especially in London, and he assured me that the oversight I had pointed out to him, namely that Ms. Bryner's name had been omitted from the program, would shortly be displayed in the free theater-circular's "Who's Who."

Already before I arrived in the States in December 1947, I was especially proud of my friendship with Anthony Asquith, one of the finest British film directors (with Michael Powell) working in England between the 1930s and 1960s. Even today, I still cherish his generous testimonial to me, his remarks that he considered me "a screenwriter of ability and enthusiasm" and that some of the screenplays of mine he had read showed "a great deal of interesting possibilities." In my opinion his finest directorial work included the G.B.Shaw clasic "Pygmalion" that he had co-directed

with its star (and my old friend) Leslie Howard, and Oscar Wilde's "The Importance of Being Earnest."

Anthony was the son of England's Prime Minister during World War I, Herbert Henry Asquith, a kind and generous man, completely unassuming and highly regarded by everybody in British movie circles.

Closer to home, a wonderful letter from that magnificent stage actress Uta Hagen reached me in July 1948 after I had let her know how much I had been captivated by her and Marlon Brando's majestic Broadway performances in "A Streetcar Named Desire," one of the finest bit of acting I have ever seen on stage.

In her reply to my congratulatory letter, she wrote: "...what a beautiful, beautiful letter. I shall always keep it. I'm quite overwhelmed with happiness to have moved you so much and am deeply grateful for your expression of it."

A year earlier, her friend, Mr. Adir, had provided the 1947 affidavit for me to join my sister in the U.S.; yet several decades later Ms. Hagen did not remember who I was when her old friend, my cousin Ilse, visited her backstage in the 1990s while she was appearing on Broadway to rave reviews in "Two Plays."

On April 18, 1949, that magnificent critic John Mason Brown thanked me for my remembering the Trans-Artlantic Quiz program that had been a favorite of BBC listeners during and after the war, although his letter to me really was prompted by my appreciation of the witty lecture he had just given to the audience at the English-Speaking Union, of which I was a member at the time. With his customary modesty, he summed up his Transatlantic Quiz show in his letter in these words: "It remains a source of regret to me that due to the strange and unfriendly workings of Lend Lease, the program was removed from the air. The Messrs. Morley and Brogan were the stars and titans on it. I am afraid I supplied only restful silences."

(Which he certainly did not.)

Morley, of course, was the brilliant actor Robert Morley, who also wrote that popular play "Edward, My Son," which had later been converted into a successful film.

Unfortunately, sometimes one tends to forget what the writer of a letter was referring to and this is the case in a brief note I had received in May 1944 from Laurence Olivier, who ends his letter with "Please accept my best wishes for all your enterprises." My God, what enterprises did my fertile mind entertain when I was twenty-one?

Much more encouraging proved to be the letter Joseph I. Breen, the Vice President of the feared Hollywood Hays Office, the Production Code Administration, and also the Director of the Motion Picture Association, had written to Lajos Biro, the Anglo-Hungarian playwright, on September 5, 1946 about "our good friend Paul Kuttner."

Breen then continued: "At the very earliest possible moment, I shall make an effort to talk to Charles Vidor and Harry Cohn and Billy Wilder, in the hope that we may be able to get some one of these fellows to do something to help this very fine young man. I was greatly impressed by him and I do want to help him...if I can."

Well, even he couldn't get me a job in the movie industry after my arrival in Hollywood in December 1947. Not that he could be blamed; at that time half the production units in California were idled by the dire economic postwar situation in Europe, which could not, understandably, waste dollars on the import of American movies when they lacked the money to import badly needed food.

Even so, well before my leaving London for the U.S., Mr. Breen's secretary, R. Taylore, dashed cold water on my movie hopes when she wrote that Mr. Breen had had his gall bladder removed and that "the general motion picture studio strike had made it impossible

for him even to turn his attention to the enormous amount of mail which kept accumulating."

Moreover, the United Service for New Americans at New York's Park Row somehow got involved in the Breen-Kuttner affair when Ann S. Petluck, the director of its Migration Department, wrote to the Refugee Children's Movement in London on January 24,1947 that "Mr.Breen is willing to put in writing that there is a position available for Mr. Kuttner. However, you know written offers of general employment cannot be made part of the visa application. We would be pleased to contact any other friends whom Mr. Paul Kuttner may designate regarding possible affidavits."

For that miracle of obtaining an affidavit I had to wait several months longer. But I remained hopeful. If as illustrious a figure as Eleanor Roosevelt could be instrumental with her letter to me dated February 11,1946 in helping my sister Annemarie to escape the hell of postwar Berlin (even though House of Representative member of the 4th District in Connecticut, Claire Boothe Luce, had to turn my sister down in her most gracious letter to me of September 24, 1946), then I saw no reason why another sunny miracle would not decide to finally shine upon my person sooner or later and grant me legal entry to the United States, as it at long last did with my entry to this country on December 8, 1947 with the help of Mr. Adir's affidavit. (But what a difference,when you consider that by the beginning of the twenty-first century, there were more than nine million illegal immigrants in the U.S. and only relatively few of them are ever being deported.)

Barely four months prior to December 1947 I did receive a wonderful letter from Orson Welles to whom I had written a note of appreciation for making two of the finest movies ever produced, "Citizen Cane" and "The Magnificent Ambersons." I had addressed

that letter to the Claridges Hotel on London's Brook Street and he answered me on August 14,1947,saying "That was a very interesting and thoughtful letter you took the trouble to write to me and here are my thanks for it. Please do not believe anything you read in the papers,ever. Of course,I haven't given up the fight. We have just begun to fight. Keep at it. All my cordial best wishes, Orson Welles."

Less than seven months later, on March 3, 1948, another of Hollywood's greatest actors, Edward G. Robinson, sent me a letter from Warner Brothers, in which he wrote to my 454 North Vista address in Beverly Hills that he was sure "we can arrange for you to come on the 'Key Largo' set and perhaps find time for a chat in my dressingroom."

That truly came to pass, but unfortunately he was surrounded at the time by so many people - - publicity hawkers encouraging me to ask him certain gossip-kind of questions, make-up artists, photographers, secretaries and scriptgirls feeding him lines for the next shot, that his dressingroom began to resemble the famous Marx Brothers scene in the cabin of "A Night at the Opera." I felt lost and could hardly get any of my questions in edgeways, that it proved, for me at least, a total washout, and my "London Week" editor, Maurice Speed, did not include the report in any of my show biz columns.

Nevertheless, Maurice proved to be quite sorry but also extremely grateful to me when, in the spring of 1956, I finally decided to terminate my monthly showbusiness contributions to his London magazine since my workload, my plans to visit Europe for a few months and my attempts to get my novel published monopolized most of my working moments. In his April 4, 1956 acceptance of my resignation,he wrote: "We have had a long and pleasant association and I am, I assure you, most grateful for the regularity with which you have sent your

contributions each month. I think it had given "Show Talk" the kind of novelty which it needs, and I have watched with great interest your change in style during the years. Frankly, I shall not make any effort to replace you and for the time being at least I shall just carry on without the New York Newsletter."

A similar reference was issued to me by the editor of the Swiss weekly "Der Weg," when I informed him shortly before my departure from England in November 1947 that I was emigrating to the United States and could no longer submit my London reportorial articles to him. Dr.L. Joillerat, the editor, nevertheless,wrote me a glowing reference on August 25, 1947 that "...we have always been very glad to reproduce the most valuable information which we received from him on political, cultural and social problems and events."

And my retirement in 1962 from Watson-Guptill, America's largest how-to art publisher,prompted a similar efflux of praise that truly warmed the cockles of my heart and immediately landed me a job at Sterling Publishing Company. Among other attributes from Watson-Guptill's advertising director Cy Ellison, its vice president,Richard W. Hubbard, had this to say in his November 1962 reference:

"In book conferences as well as in his analytical reports,Mr. Kuttner has proved himself invaluable in guiding the content value and teaching approach of the books from their initial manuscript form to the final production stage...On the personal level, Paul Kuttner has enjoyed the greatest popularity with all his coworkers as a result of his friendly and helpful disposition and his honest,trustworthy character."

That reference pleased me as much as an October 1951 note I received from the superb actress and acting teacher Uta Hagen after

I had written her a long letter praising her outstanding Broadway performance in Shaw's "St.Joan." She wrote: "Dear Paul:Thanks with all my heart for your letter which showed such a keen understanding of my artistic aims where 'St.Joan' was concerned. That's more than I can say for most of the critics.Even those who like what I did."

On the other hand, some of the British stars of stage and screen visiting New York were incredibly polite in turning me down as an interviewer for a number of valid reasons, even though they had seen my showbusiness column in the"London Week" and in the London daily "News Chronicle," where Ann Whitfield used many of my American items in her column "Words and Music." In her letter of February 2, 1949, she did compliment my submitted material as being "useful and lively."

By the same token, I also liked to lend a helping hand to a person who was not only world-famous but had been much-maligned in the American media when she gave birth to a baby, fathered not by her husband but her lover. It happened to be the time when Senator Joe McCarthy reigned supreme in the U.S. and anything slightly controversial or left of the extreme right proved to become banner headlines as being un-American. This happened to be the case when probably the greatest female movie star working at the time, Ingrid Bergman, had deserted her husband and become pregnant in Italy due to her affair with the renowned Italian film director Roberto Rosselini. Most of the U.S. dailies attacked Ms.Bergman for her immoral behavior and boycotted her movies, films in which she mostly presented sweet,pure,virginal characters. It is true that from a marital point of view she acted unwisely and unfaithfully, but the campaign of hatred and contempt headlined against her in the early 1950s resembled in fury and savagery the hatred generated by the

British and
espionage trials against the traitorous/U.S.citizens convicted of handing over atom-bomb secrets to the Soviet Union. So I sat down and wrote a letter to Ms. Bergman, whom I had seen two years earlier emerging from a Beverly Hills bakery with her young daughter Pia, decrying the hysterical media outburst against her in the U.S., and already two weeks later, on March 2, 1950, she dropped me a note from Rome, saying: "I thank you for the kind letter and for your effort in my defence. It makes me very happy to know that there are also people like you."

Besides taking care of my correspondence with friends and motion picture performers and being employed by Church World Service (CWS) as a social worker, seeking homes and jobs for Jewish and Christian Displaced Persons in the States, I also kept up with my nocturnal rounds of interviewing Broadway stars for my London-based show biz magazine and on occasion managed to help my sister's friend, Fedor Brook, by replacing him once or twice a week in 1949 as a "nocturnal custodian" or nightwatchman at New York's Riverside Cathedral, where one had to push the button of a bell every hour to convince the police that one had not fallen asleep on the job.

Fedor had arrived at about the same time in this country as my sister Annemarie (1946) and in 1954 became a token official on the New Jersey Turnpike, where we actually saw him perform his duties after my sister had gotten married and her husband Joe had purchased a Dodge-Dart. The irony is that Fedor was a well-known Jewish dentist in pre-war Berlin and it happened to be him of all the people whom the occupying Soviet forces had selected in 1945 to identify Adolf Hitler's dental work from the X-ray plates the Russians had found in the office of Dr.Blaschke, Hitler's dentist, which indeed Fedor could identify positively by comparing it all to the Führer's skull, dug up days earlier in the Chancellery garden.

About the time of meeting Fedor on the N.J.Turnpike, it came to pass that I bade farewell to a French girl, Jocelene Valente, who had been working with me at my Displaced Person organization, Church World Service. When this young lady left with her mother to return to France, our office sent the two off on the "Queen Mary" and to our surprise two other passengers on the ship happened to be the very happily married movie stars Virginia Mayo and Michael O'Shea. About a dozen newspaper reporters interviewed and photographed them, and since I had my box camera with me to take a few pictures of the departing mother and daughter, I approached the movie couple, when the press had completed their shooting session, and asked them whether they'd permit me to take one more shot of them. Both of them were gracious enough to consent to my request and I sent them a couple of the developed pictures I had taken of them, despatching them to the Dorchester Hotel in London, where I knew they'd be staying from newspaper reports. To my surprise I had a letter from both of them about a month later in which they thanked me for the photos that they considered "real good." They mentioned that the boat ride was quite rough, but that they had lots of fun on board. As a postscripts they enquired whether I would send them a few more of the snapshots. I sent them half a dozen more and they returned one of them to me with the inscription: "To Paul - sincere good wishes - - Virginia Mayo and Michael O'Shea." It had always puzzled me that here was a famous Hollywood movie couple with all the world's best camera resources at their disposal and thousands of photos of them being despatched to every corner of the world, and yet they clamored for a three-second snapshot from somebody with a ten-dollar Agfa-box camera!

By that time, though, I had securely settled in the U.S. and no longer wished to return to my beloved England for good. But earlier,

in March 1948, shortly following my arrival in the United States, my heart still hankered after my British friends and especially England, impoverished as it was at the time, and I seriously considered returning there, which I may have done if it had not been for my sister,who I could not bear being separated from for the second time in my life. Consequently, I informed the British stage and film star John Mills that I might plan to start an Anglo-American organization in London,with Mr.Mills as a possible president, and already a couple of weeks later, on April 1, he replied from his home in Fulmer, Buckinghamshire, that my "idea sounds most interesting. If you will get in touch with us when you come to England, my wife and I hope that you will dine with us one evening and tell us more news of this scheme."

However, since I finally decided (with pride and pleasure) to settle for good in the U.S. and have never returned to my beloved British Isles, that utopian idea never materialized, in fact collapsed still-born, and was soon forgotten.

Nevertheless,a letter of mine, that in retrospect proved to be rather foolish, got deservedly short shrift from another man in England, probably the greatest English-language playwright of the twentieth century: George Bernard Shaw. He could afford to be rude, honest and to the point when he wrote a few lines to me after that rather immature letter I had written him on November 10,1947, shortly before my departure for the U.S. from London.

In it I had mentioned that I wanted to better the world and improve the condition of mankind with my screenplays and future works the way he had managed to do singlehandedly with his literary output. Already a few days later I had his reply from his home at Ayot Saint Lawrence in Welwyn,Hertforshire. In his inimitable clear handwriting in red ink he wrote: "This is all nonsense.If you were a

journalist,your first business is to earn your bread and that of your family in the ordinary routine of your profession. You cannot live by worldbettering, which is only a costly hobby. I get hundreds of such boyish letters. G.B.S. 20/11/1947"

How right GBS turned out to be with his counsel to me! It also proved to be the last ever letter I received in England before emigrating to the United States.

There are four additional 1940s letters of thanks I had received from some of that period's most celebrated,popular musicians in response to my own letters of admiration for them, but inexplicably and to my greatest regret each of these acknowledgments has been misplaced or lost in the last sixty years: brief communications from the American band leaders Paul Whiteman and Guy Lombardo as well as the British singers Vera Lynn and Gracie Fields - - household names at the time, yet totally unknown to the present generation, unless these teens ever listen to Joe Franklin's (nostalgic New York) radio program until five on Sunday mornings.

TRULY BRIEF ENCOUNTERS WITH THE SUBLIME.

When you live in cosmopolitan New York for well over half a century, you are bound to come across some well-known faces sooner or later.

In the 1960s, for instance, I saw Don Ameche on Fifth Avenue and Forty-Second Street in a custom-made suit that still lingers in my mind as probably the best-fitting and most elegant suit of clothes I have ever seen on a man. Those fans who greeted him on the street with a "Hi, Don" or "Hi, Mr. Ameche," he graciously responded to with an amiable wave and a polite little smile, with which he also responded to my greeting.

Approximately ten years earlier, I happened to walk through Central Park and a rather tall middle-aged couple was approaching me. The woman was quite slender and the man a very distinguished-looking white-maned Hollywood-typish banker. The fact that people stopped and stared at the two focussed my attention on them as well. Then I realized who the woman was: none other than Greta Garbo, who had never made a movie after completing "The Two-Faced Woman" before Pearl Harbor. As luck would have it I had my Agfa-box camera with me. Immediately I ran ahead, hiding on the lawn behind a tree and waiting for the couple to come close enough for me to take a good picture of them. When they were about ten or fifteen yards away, I stepped from behind the tree and posted myself quickly on the pedestrian path, trying my best to center them in my camera's viewfinder and push the shutter release button. But as soon as Garbo became aware of me trying to take a picture of her, she withdrew her arm from her escort, hid her face in the crook of her elbow and rushed by me, leaving her escort shocked and confused standing

in the middle of the pedestrian path. Finally he rushed after her, ignoring my presence thankfully altogether but leaving me disappointed, frustrated, let down for weeks in not having succeeded in capturing the world's most famous and elusive movie star.

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In 1952, a more tragic occasion brought me face to face with another Hollywood luminary. On my way to my office at the inter-faith Church World Service, where I was employed as a social worker for Displaced Persons arriving in this country, I frequently passed the Gramercy Park Hotel, and early one morning a man who looked slightly familiar to me came in my direction with a newspaper rolled under his arm. Only when he was about a dozen yards away, did I recognize him: John Garfield. I smiled at him and simply said, "HI, Mr. Garfield," but he did not react to my greetings in any manner, shape or form, that I suspected it hadn't been the movie star at all. A few steps later I turned around and noticed that he also had stopped to look around at me. He grinned from ear to ear and simply said: "Morning, buddy," then entered the hotel and vanished.

Tragically, two or three days later the world's headlines proclaimed that Garfield had died of a heart attack at the Gramercy Park Hotel. That's when I knew for sure that the guy I had seen really was Garfield and not some look-alike. I also wondered whether I had been the last stranger Garfield had ever addressed in his life, because the newspaper stories at the time gloated over the fact that he had died while having sexual intercourse with his mistress at the hotel and that she was understandably in such a state of shock and despair that she had locked herself with his corpse in their hotel room for about two days before the police entered the bedroom and found Garfield's body and the distraught,hysterical woman.

Of course, a similar tragic fate befell Governor Nelson Rockefeller a few decades later, several years after I had made the New York Herald-Tribune front page with him the day after he

was elected New York governor and I landed in hot water with my bosses. (See page 245)

However, there happened to be one other world-famous personality I had met outside the Gramercy Park Hotel around 1953, just about the time he had won the Nobel Peace Prize. Again, at about 8 in the morning I was passing the hotel on my way to work when I noticed a solitary male figure standing at the corner of the hotel with his eyes closed, his face turned up and soaking in the feeble morning sun. Unmistakably it was Dr. Albert Schweitzer, wearing his customary starched high collar and bowtie and a dark suit, but even if he had worn a clown's outfit, it would have been impossible to mistake him for somebody else, especially with his thick-maned greyish hair and full-bodied moustache. For decades his was one of the best-known faces of the twentieth century and his pensive close-up by Karsh of Ottawa must be considered as one of the finest portrait photos in the last hundred years.

There was nobody else around on the street and I approached him gingerly when he opened his eyes.

"Dr.Schweitzer?" I asked, fully aware,of course,who he was.

"Yes," he said, and I addressed him in German, his native tongue since he was born in Upper Alsace.

I told him what an honor it was to come face to face with him and enquired whether he would permit me to shake his hand. His wrinkled face broke into a faint little smile and we shook hands. He asked me where I came from because he had detected my German accent. I explained that I was born in Germany but had spent the waryears in England. He enquired about the reason of my departure from Germany and I told him that I was lucky enough to emigrate to England with a Kindertransport before the outbreak of World War II. Frowning,he queried me about the nature of such a trans-

port and I clarified this for him in a few words. Another deep frown creased his forehead partly hidden by his unruly hair and he asked me whether my parents had been lucky enough to follow me to England. When I went into some detail about the death of my family in Nazi concentration camps, he grabbed my hands impulsively, pressed them and said: "While I had to deal with leprosy you had to deal with bestiality."

I thanked Dr.Schweitzer for his commiserating words and expressed my hope that my mother could watch this scene from heaven, because she had treasured the grammophone records of him playing the organ, which in turn had introduced me to classical music at an early age, especially to Bach. He still held my hands and said: "I must go and pray. What were your parents' names?"

"Paul and Margarete Kuttner," I replied, and he released my hands.

We said "Auf Wiedersehen" and he walked slowly into the hotel. I wonder today whether he ever recalled this brief encounter once he had returned to Lambaréné in Africa.

However, it is highly likely that another person with whom I had the briefest of unplanned encounters would recall me for the rest of her life. Her name was Christine Jorgensen. Of course, she turned out to be the world's first and best-known sex-change individual.

Of all the locations where we met to be, it happened on the little-known Pass-A-Grille beach in Florida in October 1959, where I had gone on a week's vacation with my first wife, Myrtil. On a particularly hot afternoon we took a boatride on a fishing vessel and saw a giant turtle slowly being strangulated on the high seas by getting intertwined in a huge defective net and even though I took a color slide of this horrible event, tears burned in my eyes and finally I could no longer watch this slow death by choking.

Today, well over forty years later, the sound of the turtle gasping for air still haunts me and I will never touch turtle soup. However, when the handful of passengers finally disembarked, walking down a narrow gangplank, a bunch of photographers waited at the pier and started taking pictures of the blond young lady right in front of me. When she stopped to pose for the photographers and enjoyed this session for a good ten minutes, I finally lost my patience since she was blocking the passengers' way to terra firma.

As gently as I could I patted the lady's behind, asking her kindly to move so that the rest of the passengers could disembark.

She spun around furiously, addressing me in a dark and rather deepish voice that if I touched her like that again, she'd call the police authorities. She stampeeded angrily off the boat and Myrtil asked me to apologize to her, even though no ill will was intended by my gesture. I hastened after her and expressed in a few words how sorry I was, literally asking for her forgiveness and explaining that I was on a holiday with my new wife and whether she'd permit me to take one color slide of her. She looked at my wife and consented at once. Ten seconds later I had taken it and asked her if I could send a copy of it to her once it had been developed. She simply shook her head and reprimanded me once more, justifiably, for my untoward action a few minutes earlier, then shook Myrtil's and my hand in a soft feminine clasp and walked out of our lives. At her death in 1989, she was only 62 years old. What I also admired about her was her expertly tailored two-piece sunbathing costume that showed off the well-rounded contours of her breasts without revealing any of the cleavage.

How I wished I had also had my camera with me a few years earlier, in the spring of 1948, when I went shopping one night at Los Angeles' Farmers' Market after seeing a movie. I had entered the huge rather deserted supermarket and considered buying some oranges, which at the time still appeared like a luxury item to me, having arrived recently from ravaged, impoverished wartime England. A tall man stood at the fruit counter and made a selection of the citrus fruit, squeezing each orange for juiciness I gathered. The guy took his time and even I who is not much of a clothes horse noticed how magnificently he was attired in his well-fitting pinstriped suit and hat. He must have noticed that I was waiting for him to complete his selection so I could choose my own oranges. He looked up and in a terribly familiar voice said: "I'll be through in a minute."

I told him to take his time as I looked up into his face and immediately connected the voice to the face: it was Gary Cooper.

To be in the presence of world-famous personalities always quickened my heartbeat, but somehow I managed to blurt out: "That's all right, Mr. Cooper. But I would have thought you'd have a cook buying your food."

He glanced at me again and flashed me one of his rare smiles. "Not around midnight," he said and took exactly one orange to the check-out counter, then disappeared into the nocturnal streetscene.

He was twice my age at the time, and as a former Boy Scout in Berlin in the early 1930s I should have offered him my services in carrying the orange to wherever he was heading. True, almost twenty years earlier, actually I had joined the Boy Scouts (Pfadfinder) in Germany, but when the Nazis absorbed the Scouts into the Hitler Youth and Jungvolk movements I was fortunately excluded due to my non-Aryan heritage, and later from the German army and certain death. C'est la vie

And c'est la vie again, when I met a few important people late in 1948 during a dinner given by the English-Speaking Union, of which I was a member, at the Waldorf-Astoria's large diningroom in honor of U.S. Secretary of Defense, James Forrestal, and the English Ambassador to the U.S., Sir Oliver Franks. Every man on that special occasion was attired in a tuxedo - - every man that is except for me. I stood out like a sore thumb in that crowd, wearing a new gray flannel suit from Weber & Heilbronner. Before the proceedings of endless speeches about the unbreakable alliance of the U.S. and Great Britain, about five hundred guests lined up to be introduced to Forrestal and Franks as well as to Edward Stettinius, the former U.S. Secretary of State, and when it was my turn to shake the hand of Mr. Forrestal I apologized to him that I had arrived not wearing a tuxedo. His hand was sweaty and shaking when he asked me how old I was. After I had told him that I was twenty-six, he pressed my hand even more and said that he wished he was that old again. Only a short time later did I understand why he had made that remark; because about three months following that festivity he suddenly resigned from his cabinet post, and a little while after that he committed suicide by jumping out of his hospital window.

That tragic event occurred the year before I had the honor of being a member of the audience at Thomas Mann's farewell speech in the United States before he retreated to Switzerland, and on that occasion he addressed an SRO crowd at Hunter College speaking about Goethe and Democracy.

But in the musical field I was also privileged to attend many concerts around that time, hearing some of the most celebrated artists of the day. The Lewisohn Stadium happened to be just a couple of subway stops from where I lived on Riverside Drive, and here I heard Fritz Reiner and the New York Philharmonic and the soon-to-die pianist Kappell playing the Second

Piano Concerto by Rachmaninoff while Claudio Arrau, with Sir Adrian Boult conducting, could be heard in a Beethoven concerto very much as we could listen to the same concerto there being played by Artur Rubinstein a year or so later.

It must have been around that time or a little bit following those symphonic occasions that I had another unexpected encounter with a world-famous celebrity.

After half a century I cannot remember exactly what it was that induced me to do some research in the Fifth Avenue Public Library on 42nd Street - - to my way of thinking the finest library in the world - - but there I was, and on those occasions I always made a beeline for one of the two gigantic reading rooms - - Room 315 on the third floor - - which at the time was open to the public seven days a week until ten p.m. and where I could read, study and take notes of almost any book ever published in the U.S., literally millions of volumes (including, decades later, virtually all of my own books) and after I had filled out my "call slips" with notations obtained from 3" x 5" cards in thousands of alphabetized drawers, I only had to wait seven or eight minutes to obtain the requested volumes and retire with them to those long golden oak tables and study the tomes there under that gorgeous Tiepoloesque clouded ceiling, helping me to write later all my books, there, aided by one of those green-shaded desk lamps until close to ten o'clock at night.

In the course of one of those evenings, a man settled down with a couple of thin volumes next to my side-armed chair and immediately exploded in two or three alarmingly wet sneezes, causing me to stare him down with an unconcealed degree of hostility. He apologized immediately in a low rumbling voice, explaining that he had a beastly cold. It was the timbre of the man's voice,

his French accent and his un-toupeed head that prompted me to blink and whip my head back to him in an unmistakable double-take. I knew at once that I was confronting Charles Boyer. I replied in a low voice (the library does not tolerate conversation in those two gargantuan reading rooms) that I hoped he'd feel better soon, which he graciously accepted in a low-key "Thank you," then my brain went numb,trying to prolong the conversation with this world-renowned romantic actor, but since he was already engrossed in one of his books I tried, vainly, to concentrate on my own tome of literature. Finally, though, I acknowledged the fact that I could not apply enough mental intentness to intellectually ingest the words in the books in front of me, and at long last I got up to returm the volumes to the front desk. Meekly I bade the actor farewell by whispering "Good-bye,Mr. Boyer," and although he was already in his fifties and I around thirty at the time, he looked up at me with a faint smile, rose and grabbed my hand with his cold clammy right and in his sonorous, though stuffy, voice expressed his hope that he had not spread his cold to me.

Although I probably would have bragged to my friends later that I had actually caught Charles Boyer's cold, my anti-bodies did see to it that I was spared the French movie star's contagious illness. Still, even though I appreciated Mr. Boyer's gesture of his gentlemanly handshake, I retired at once to the third-floor restroom of the library and washed my hands thoroughly, though regretfully, of his germs.

Never, however, did I have to worry about the germs on the hands of Leo Tolstoy's daughter, Alexandra, whom I frequently met at the pier in the late 1940s and early 1950s. She was the head of the Tolstoy Foundation in America and often came to supervise activities on the New York pier after her organization had sponsored

countless Russian refugees (Displaced Persons) from war-torn Europe and arranged for them to emigrate to the United States.

Here, on the New York pier, her reception desk was "pitched" right next to the DP organization I helped to represent and, unavoidably, it happened many a time that we exchanged a few friendly words while waiting for the DPs to disembark. Once only did she bring up her world-famous father to me, namely the fact of his nine children it proved to be her alone with whom he chose to desert his family secretly in Yasnaya Polyana at the age of eighty-two. Less than a fortnight later already he died at a Russian railroad station. She emigrated to the U.S. in the early 1930s and soon founded the Tolstoy Foundation.

Another émigré who worked for Mme. Tolstoy and became a good friend of mine was Natasha Koniahin. She met her future husband on the pier, too, later moved with him to Jackson Heights, where she gave birth to a daughter, Olga, and lived only a couple of blocks from me. For years I met Natasha at eight in the morning taking Olga to her neighborhood school while I was rushing for my Number 7 subway train. Today, Natasha is widowed, lives on Staten Island a few miles from her daughter, who is married, a social worker, and has two children of her own. Sic tempus fugit!

AN OVERTURE TO A THIRTY-FOUR-YEAR OPUS. (1962)

After I had been employed in New York by the how-to art and craft publisher Watson-Guptill for just over half-a-dozen years, the management decided to move its main office to the Midwest. Its employees were asked if anybody was willing to risk starting a new life a thousand miles from New York City, but of the 70 or 80 employees only a handful were willing to gamble on living in a totally new location and break up their tents in New York and New Jersey.

The year was 1962 and I had no intention of relocating to another city in the U.S. since I loved New York and, even more important, I did not want to leave my sister Annemarie alone in New York after almost having lost her during the time of the Holocaust.

Selling the Watson-Guptill art books and its magazine "American Artist" began to bore and tire me and it appeared to be a dead-end with no advancement, no promotion, in sight, pleasant and unchallenging as the job turned out to be. A skeleton staff actually continued to operate at 1515 Broadway in New York, but I happened to be one of those selected to go with the firm to the Midwest.

As usual I hated the idea of being unemployed and looking for a new job, but for once I was saved this unpleasant experience because the "American Artist"'s advertising manager, Cy Ellison, recommended me to apply for a job at another publisher in New York who might want to employ me if there proved to be an opening at that firm. He and the business manager, Richard Hubbard, wrote a couple of glowing references for me, explaining what a "gold mine" I had proven to be selling Watson-Guptill books in the New York City area and Mr. Hubbard added that I was diligent, reliable and intelligent (in and outside the office). Somehow I doubted that I could

live up to this tiptop overall recommendation, but at least I felt that it might be a good opening to any prospective employer.

Armed with these two references,I took the subway to 497 Park Avenue South to see the head of Sterling Publishing Company, David A. Boehm, who had already been alerted by Cy Ellison on the phone that I would come to see him.

I took the elevator to the tenth floor and had to wait for almost two hours until I was ushered into Mr.Boehm's huge book-lined office looking out on 27th Street and Park Avenue South. A secretary named Sylvia Link shared the office with Mr.Boehm.

He was a man in his fifties, with ruddy cheeks and a white pixie goatee, a pair of hornrimmed glasses, a high bald dome with a fringe of grey hair. Sylvia was about ten years his junior, a pleasant-looking, sturdily built woman,also sporting a pair of hornrimmed spectacles, who loved to talk. In fact, each time I answered Mr. Boehm's questions about my career and background, Sylvia burst in with a long editorial relating to my life and then comparing it to her own. When asked about my education, she proceeded to give a detailed rundown on hers.

The fact that Mr.Boehm would even listen to my answers, appearing to be genuinely interested in my past experiences, gave me reason to believe that I would be hired as his personal assistant. One hour changed into two hours of an intensive cross-examination of my life, but then there came a time when Mr.Boehm finally had enough from his secretary's interferences and he shouted at her to let him be the one to do the interviewing. Whereupon Sylvia started to counter-attack, claiming that he didn't know how to interview his prospective employees. I thought that this was an odd way for a secretary to criticize her boss, especially in front of a total stranger seeking employment at his firm.

Mr. Boehm showed visible signs of being displeased by his secretary's outburst and in response to her offending remarks, he took off one of his sandals and threw it across the room at her.

I did not know quite how to react to this offensive since I actually happened to be in the line of fire between the two assailants. But then, to add insult to injury, Sylvia opened her desk drawer, withdrew a pair of long editorial scissors and hurled it at her boss. This time the almost inevitable happened. Still being in the line of fire between the two desks, the tip of the scissors meant for Mr. Boehm, struck me, hitting my left arm. Fortunately I was wearing a tweed jacket at the time and was not hurt, but I did jump up to get out of the way of the two combatants.

Mr. Boehm leaped to his feet and screamed, red-faced and visibly upset, that the scissors could have struck his eyes and seriously injured him. The fact that the "weapon" actually had hit me instead remained unmentioned, but the argument turned into a rather unnecessary exhibition of four-letter words on Sylvia's part while I slank, frightened and confused, further back to the radiators under the windows that looked out peacefully on Park Avenue South.

The telephone ringing on Sylvia's desk was ignored; so finally I picked it up, took a message that Mr. Boehm should call back a Mr.David Kutner at Apollo Stationery. I recall this short telephone message since my name also happened to be Kuttner, although David's last name was spelled with ong"t" only, as I learned later, with Apollo being the permanent stationery supplier of Sterling.

After both Sylvia and Mr. Boehm had simmered down a bit and replaced all flying missiles on their desks, I informed Mr. Boehm to contact Mr. Kutner at Apollo.

Sylvia laughed, congratulated me on keeping so cool under enemy fire and called me a "f.w." I had never heard of that expression

before and she told me I still had a lot to learn. (It meant "fucking wonder.")

Mr. Boehm rose from his chair, shook my hand and said I should report to work the next morning at nine with the starting salary of a hundred dollars a week.

Crazy as this introduction to Sterling Publishing Company turned out to be, I was grateful to have been hired without missing a beat in my working life or a salary check. Only when I reached the street five minutes later did I realize that in the excitement I had never been informed what job I had actually been assigned to at Sterling.

The next morning at eight-fifty I reported for work and Mr. Boehm, who was already in his office, told me to take off my jacket and tie, which I did with some puzzlement, then guided me to the shippingroom in the back of the office and introduced me to Al Newton, a charming African-American guy in his twenties, to Tony and Phil, two mail-carriers whose day-off it happened to be and who frequently came to help out in the afternoons after their mail deliveries had been completed for the day, and then there were about ten other employees, all of whom served as pickers and packers, meaning they studied invoices and/or packing lists that had been typed in the billing department, then picked the books from endlessly long steel shelves loaded with piles of hardcover and paperback volumes and packed them in variously sized cartons or padded jiffy bags. My job was to help pick these books listed on the invoices and pile them for the packer on specially built sturdy long tables. The books on the shelves were arranged by subject matter, such as volumes dealing with carpentry, gardening, geography, coin and stamp collecting, astrology and dozens of other topics, mostly geared to the teenage market but also to the more adult trade.

To my shock, Mr. Boehm informed now me that I had been hired as a book picker and next he instructed the shippingroom foreman to "teach me the ropes."

This was not what I had expected. I certainly did not want to pick books from shelves and place them on packing tables for the rest of my life. But beggars could not afford to be choosers and I decided to discuss the rest of my career,(or at least the next year or two) with my darling sister and her wonderful husband that evening.

During my first lunchbreak I studied the layout of the shelves of the approximately 150 titles and to my surprise came across one title that really struck my fancy, an English-copyrighted book called "The Guinness Book of Superlatives," edited by a pair of twins (later to become my friends), Norris and Ross McWhirter.

(More about this book later,although it should be pointed out that,initially,this world-famous tome started out as nothing more than slips of paper with world records printed on them,which had been placed on bars in British pubs to settle arguments,and these slips proved to be so successful that the Guinness brewery contacted the McWhirters, well-known for their compiling activity,and asked them to turn these pamphlets into a little booklet,which sold for pennies in the pubs and even in a few bookstores,and on a 1950s visit to England Mr.Boehm suggested to the McWhirters to let him sell a thousand copies of these meager volumes in the United States. Attractive as these thin tomes with their myriad illustrations of the world's fattest and tallest people turned out to be, it did not seem to be as successful, saleswise, in the States as in Great Britain.)

But that was not my immediate worry.As far as I was concerned, I wanted out of the shippingroom,and presto! I was also annoyed that

the tall, sandy-haired foreman smelled of alcohol at nine in the morning and seemed to be in a constant state of stupor that prevented him from even explaining things to me. The second day on my job started out no different from my introductory day, but to my surprise the alcoholic foreman never bothered to show up after lunch on that day. At first nobody bothered to report his absence to Mr. Boehm, thinking he'd show up a bit later than usual, but by four o'clock Mr. Boehm made his appearance in the shippingroom, where he was informed that we were working without a foreman's supervision. Mr.Boehm instructed Tony to have the foreman report to the front office when he showed up and then announced to the shippingroom crew that I would now serve as the new foreman.

This came as a total surprise to me and proved to be something I did not relish as someone not familiar with the job. Moreover, I could sense the immediate hostile reaction of the shippingroom crew to this development since everybody was much more familiar with the workings of this Sterling operation than I was obviously and much more qualified to run everything.

There was only one thing I could do to alleviate the grumbling of the crew and the antagonistic looks I garnered. I simply had to show my goodwill to everybody and prove to them that I did not cherish Mr. Boehm's decision. I asked Tony, the daily part-time employee from the post office, to accompany me to Mr.Boehm's room. Puzzled by what I had up my sleeve, he followed me reluctantly and made his entrance with me into Mr. Boehm's spacious office. Without any pretense, I asked Mr.Boehm to rescind his decision of making me head of the shippingroom since I had just started the job and was not familiar with any of the details or even the personnel of the shippingroom. More important, that I felt it would be more to the advantage of the corporation if someone like Tony who knew all the ins and outs of this particular business ran the shippingroom operation, at

least until a more permanent full-time foreman could be hired, who had experience in this particular field.

Plainly, Mr. Boehm did not trust his ears and asked me if I was trying to countermand his order. I explained that it was not a matter of going against his wishes, but that my inexperience in running a huge shippingroom would end in disaster for Sterling while Tony, who had worked there for years, or any other fulltime employee, most likely would prove to do a much better job there than I could hope to accpomplish.

For his turn Mr. Boehm insisted that if I objected to his decision he would discharge me on the spot. I told him that, of course, I did not want to be unemployed, and with a heavy heart I accepted his offer of making me the head of the shippingroom.

On our way back there, Tony pulled me aside and shook my hand, thanking me for my suggestion to select Tony as the new boss; he would also see to it that everybody in the shippingroom was informed about the details of this mini-conference and that he could assure me life "backstage" would be more pleasant and cooperative as far as my "running the show" was concerned. True enough, once back in the shippingroom, Tony summoned the entire crew and in a few words summarized the conversation I had with the boss, and by next morning I was accepted as one of their own. Whenever I needed assistance, which was quite frequent at first, a few men of the shippingroom crew came forward to help me and by the end of the month I felt truly at home with "my boys," most of whom happened to be around my age, which meant in the vicinity of forty.

When I received my first pay two weeks later, I noticed that my weekly salary on the ckeck's detachable stub was listed as $110.00 instead of one hundred dollars, the amount I was hired for. I went back to Mr. Boehm's office and asked him if there had been

a mistake; he informed me that taking on the responsibility of running his shippingroom crew and overlooking a million-and-one details should be rewarded by a ten-dollar raise. Naturally I was delighted, although the same kind of monetary raise today would be met with contempt.

Soon I also made friends with an employee who was running the coin- and stamp-book division of Sterling, Burton H.Hobson, a decent and very capable, clever young man Mr. Boehm had found heading the coin-collectors' department at Marshall Fields in Chicago and whom he had hired on the spot, paying all his expenses of moving his family of a wife and three children to New York. Today, Burt is the chairman of Sterling, having run the company since Mr.Boehm retired in the 1980s. (He died in February 2000.) David Boehm's son, Lincoln A.Boehm, also joined his father's company in the 1970s, a highly intelligent no-nonsense boss, and now is its president.

Whether Mr.Boehm noticed that I was not too fond of running the shippingroom, I am not sure, because one day, about six months after I had started work at his company he introduced the crew and me to a middleaged man, Jack Traub, a self-published poet, and out of the blue announced that Jack would be the new head of the shippingroom and that I should show him "the tricks." I did,but felt convinced that Mr. Boehm somehow was not satisfied with my services and would finally discharge me.

When I reported to Mr.Boehm's office and asked him how two supervisors could run the department, he told me that he wanted me to join the checking department since there were too many invoices to be checked, an assignment that had been the sole responsibility of an elderly widow, Bettina Weinberg.

I shared this office with her for several years and although this assignment did keep me quite busy, it proved to be insufficiently time-consuming to fill all my daily office hours, which in turn prompted Mr. Boehm to appoint me to start writing press releases for the new books Sterling was publishing and distributing.

It turned out to be a job I enjoyed much more than the "mathematics" involved in checking pre-computerized invoices, a rather dull but exact science in figuring out, for instance, the amount to be charged for, say, 27 copies of a book selling for $21.95 at a 46% discount, with that discount depending also on how many copies of that title go to one of several branches of a bookstore chain owned, for example, by Doubleday, which had a different discount schedule from another chain of stores.

As mentioned briefly before, not too long after I had arrived at Sterling, one of the books Mr. Boehm had imported from England happened to be a yellow-jacketed title "The Guinness Book of Superlatives." Although it had sold extremely well in Britain, sales in the U.S. lagged more than expected, and im a few of my sales trips with that particular title to New York bookstroes I did meet with some resistance at first when the purchasing agents there informed me that the public seemed to question or be puzzled by the word "superlatives" in the title. And when I suggested to Mr. Boehm that "superlatives" be replaced by the more familiar noun "Recods," the Guinness estate in England did not primarily appreciate the idea at all.

However, when Mr. Boehm finally acquired the right to publish a U.S. equivalent [redacted] of the Guinness book, the American version was changed by him to "The Guinness Book of World Records," and that title literally flew off the shelves saleswise and later became a successful TV series with David Frost, who visited us

frequently at the office before he was knighted by the Queen.

Not long after the American version was published by Sterling (and later as a paperback by Bantam), the British McWhirter twins, who had successfully started the Guinness record craze singlehandedly in Britain, changed their own title to "The Guinness Book of Records" in England, and in the last forty years the various Guinness titles in all their translations throughout the world have sold more books than any other volume, except for the Bible.

As the publicity director for this American hardcover bestseller from 1962-1989, I was obviously kept extremely busy at Sterling, which also opened a Guinness World Records Exhibit Hall in New York, but even today I still mourn the assassination of my old friend and Guinness-book founder Ross McWhirter at the hand of the IRA.

Not so unexpectedly, I also remember discussing something with David Boehm and Bettina Weinberg, when our new shippingroom foreman, Jack Traub, was running through the office from door to door

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on November 22, 1963, shouting: "Kennedy has been shot!" and, strangely, enough on that fateful day I learned from Bettina that she came from a German town called Fürth, where she claimed to have known Henry Kissinger as a child. Bettina's married daughter, Ilse Goldsmith, was in the process of writing a book for Sterling "Anatomy for Children," which is still in print today, while going through a painful divorce herself; it made me an involuntary listener to her marital troubles whenever she poured her heart out to her mother in our office. Bettina did invite me a number of times for supper to her apartment in Fort Lee, New Jersey, after her retirement around 1970 but died a few years later. Of that old primary crew of officeworkers, nobody is left there today except for Burt Hobson, although I am still in touch with a handful of co-workers who also worked for many years at that office, among them my dear friend Kathryn M.Drayton, an African-American lady who is truly interested in virtually any subject under the sun and had worked in many capacities at the office for about thirty-five years and turned into a compassionate,widely read and socially minded woman loving, above all, her siblings. And then,there is the darling girl ,loved by everytbody at Sterling: Saida Abrego, who at the age of fifteen first started out at Sterling as a part-time filing clerk after school, in the 1990s got her bachelor's decree, now is happily married and has a child of her own as well as a most responsible job in New Jersey.

Occasionally I still correspond with Sterling's mailroom supervisor, Bert Shafter, who never takes a real vacation but instead makes it his business to play small parts in New York-based movies; in fact, he seems to be a favorite of Woody Allen,because that show-biz genius has selected him as an extra in most of his comedies.

Shortly after I left Sterling at the age of 74 in January 1997, I still had an occasional lunch with John Welch, the extremely wise

and reliable Sterling proofreader, one of the most intelligent people I had ever met and definitely the most widely traveled person I knew. He must have journeyed in over seventy countries while I knew him, traveling very lightly with nothing but one change of drip-and-dry underwear, socks, a shirt and razor. Yet for months he planned every step abroad in advance, knew exactly which train or bus to take, how long to spend in each museum regardless of whether it happened to be in Morocco or Sweden. He would never have dreamed of joining a any guided tour or special travel-agancy-group sightseeing deals, nor would he ever take a single photo anywhere, depending only on postcards sold at the local sightseeing locations. Yet when I left Sterling early in 1997 and came down with prostate cancer five weeks later, he did appear to me uncommonly exhausted for his age, the mid- or late fifties, being twenty years younger than me, but then, two or three years later, I was informed that quite suddenly he had died of prostate cancer. Many a time I miss his enlightening conversations with me because apart from being the most widely traveled person I ever met, he also happened to be the best-read and most knowledgable man of politics I knew as well as THE individual in my life who had seen almost every movie and Broadway play since the early 1950s. He lived a life of total intellectual exploration.

Often he and our co-worker, Bette Gahres, also a widely traveled as well as a play- and movie-enlightened lady, who made it her business to teach English at night to classes of newly arrived immigrants to the U.S., spent hours with me in John's minuscule office and our conversations there literally burst with the intellectual contents of our accumulated experiences. In the mid-nineteen-nineties Bette moved to a pleasant apartment only a couple of blocks from me in Jackson Heights and we do meet frequently on the street and sometimes enjoy a good talk and meal at the respectable Cavalier

Restaurant around the corner from us on 37th Avenue. Although she continues still / to work part-time for Sterling (teaching English to the new immigrants in her off-hours), she is the kind of reserved, highly efficient ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ woman any employee and any boss would love to have around in the office.

Sterling's / hand-picked staff members rarely had to be criticized for dereliction of duty, but this was in sharp contrast to the manager who ran the office when I first started there in 1962. That man, Leo Straus, also happened to be David A. Boehm's father-in-law and was already in his eighties. Moreover, he turned out to be a truly meticulous dresser and made it his business to check on all workers hour by hour to ascertain himself that everybody was doing the job for which they had been hired. And yet, this white-moustachioed, elegant "overseer" proved to be a kindhearted gentleman when off-duty, but finally he was asked to retire and not long after that passed away.

Now in the twenty-first century, Sterling continues to be run smoothly and successfully by the triumvirate: Burt Hobson, Lincoln Boehm and Charles Nurnberg. The latter was kind enough to mail me, quite unexpectedly, a new Sterling book in 2002, titled "Let Freedom Ring," to which he wrote the Preface. It is magnificently illustrated with the most gorgeous color plates of historical American images from the brave oath of the Mayflower Company of 1620 to President George W. Bush's poignant address to Congress following the tragic events of September 11, 2001. Ironically, this big splendid / patriotic volume, which belongs in every library, was printed in Communist China.

~~Altogether I consider myself fortunate to have been able to work for Sterling for almost three and a half decades right up to the time of my retirement in 1997.~~

To my own amazement, though, I did discover a factual error in the book, namely in the caption under FDR's portrait, where it said: "His time in office was extended to three terms to maintain consistent leadership throughout World War II."

I contacted Charles Nurnberg immediately to explain that FDR's presidency was not extended to a third term or even a sixth term since any candidate at the time could legally run and be elected to the presidency three or more times and that, in any case, when FDR was elected for the third term in 1940 the U.S. was not at war with anybody. I suggested that, preferrably, the caption for the next printing of the book be changed to: "He was elected for the fourth time to the presidency to maintain consistent leadership throughout World War II."

With his customary gentlemanly attitude, Charlie thanked me for spotting the error and explained that he would initiate the necessary revisions for the next printing of the book - - a literary treasure that should be in every American school.

Altogether I consider myself fortunate to have been able to work with such a kind and clever group of people for almost three-and-a-half decades right up to the time of my retirement in 1997.

Beyond that date, to the very present, I am still corresponding with the husband of a former co-worker of mine at Sterling from 1981 to 1983. Both of them are British, live in Yorkshire, and love travelling, and today Ralph Black must be considered one of England's finest stained-glass craftsmen and teachers. Ironically, Ralph, like me, also arrived with a Kindertransport in England in 1939.

Likewise, today, I still go to an occasional lunch at the fine local Cavalier restaurant (and its outstanding waiter Ricardo) with another ex-Sterling employee, Loretta Reynolds. In the past, I had

enjoyed several vacations in Fosterdale, N.Y. with her and her good friend,Gordon Swimm. Sadly, though,several years after Gordon's untimely passing, she understandably still misses the quiet companionship of this unassuming decent man with heart-breaking fervor, but at the same time she does manage to battle all the other obstacles fate continues stubbornly to place in her way.

THE BEST SISTER A BROTHER COULD HAVE. (1964)

When you love somebody as much as I loved my sister Annemarie, you don't know where to start explaining that overwhelming affection I felt for her. For Annemie - as I called her - as well as my parents and son I would have sacrificed my life without a moment's hesitation, although my son Stephen, thank God, is very much alive still.

After my parents' divorce in March 1928, my mother, Annemie and I lived peacefully together in the apartment at Kaiser Allee 26 Berlin until I was sixteen years old and the Nazi government had taken its initial decision to arrest Jews and non-Aryans alike, sending them to concentration camps. Of course, it was in those camps that most of my family eventually perished, although personally I was lucky enough to emigrate to England with a Kindertransport (children's transport) on February 8, 1939.

In retrospect I can say that Annemie and I never had a fight, not even an argument, which might have added some spice to the tale of my life, but living with my family (even on weekends with my remarried father ever since I was six years old) in Berlin was so peaceful and devoid of strife amongst us that no dramatic chapters can be spun from that part of my family saga. No wonder, it came as s terrible blow to me to leave Annemie, my father, and my greatest love, my mother, behind in Nazi Berlin when I had to emigrate to England at the age of sixteen shortly before the outbreak of World War II in 1939.

Annemie was nine years old when I was born in September 1922 (there was another boy between her and my date of birth, but that baby had died shortly after it was born in 1919), and Annemie always acted like a second mother to me, especially in the U.S., until death from bone cancer in New York on September 22, 1964 claimed her when she

was only fifty-one years old.

Most likely I could write a book about the events we went through together in Berlin and New York, but a few incidents do stand out in my mind, apart from those described in other chapters of this book.

For instance, one of her earliest Berlin boyfriends, Herr Zinnat, an Aryan in his thirties, who had opposed the Nazis from the start

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and/then revealed to us that the retarded prisoner of the Nazis, van der Lubbe, had nothing to do with setting the Reichstag on fire early in 1933, that in fact Göring's intimates were responsible for this misdeed in order for Hitler to abolish the Communist Party, of which,they claimed, van der Lubbe had been a member, well,this Zinnat fellow often brought coffee, cake and cigarettes to our apartment since he knew that,even then,as a non-Aryan family, our purchases of these "luxuries" were limited to one cigarette a week and a rationed amount of coffee, tea and cake totalling only a few grams.

Zinnat's face always intrigued me because his features reflected a deep sadness and hopelessness. I took great pleasure in witnessing his goodheartedness and courage in supplying us on the sly with these condiments, but one Sunday morning Zinnat did not show up, as promised, and only a week later we learned that he had been arrested for posting anti-Nazi stickers on some Berlin lamp-posts and sent to the Nazi concentration camp of Oranienburg, where he was eventually killed by the guards.

On another occasion, about a year earlier, around 1932,Annemie almost lost her life while performing gymnastic exercises,when she accidentally struck the thick glass lampshade of a wall-light in our bathroom;she cut an artery in her wrist, causing it to hemorrhage and forcing my mother and me to rush her in a taxi with a tightly wound flannel towel around her wrist to the closest hospital - the Virchow Hospital - - where her wound was stitched up just a few minutes before she would have bled to death. (It was also near that hospital that she and I were born in,the West End Sanatorium.)

Certainly I can't forget the occasion when I arrived in the U.S. on December 8, 1947 - - a day or so after one of the heaviest snowfalls last century in New York City - - and we hugged each other

for about five minutes in the icy vomit-stinking hallway at 63 West 100 Street in Manhattan, where she lived, sobbing, sobbing our hearts out with joy, with unadulterated happiness that we could meet again after nine years of hell, having survived World War II and the Holocaust. Inwardly, though, we would always mourn the loss of our over-everything beloved mother and father, who had fallen victim to Hitler's ruthlessly organized annihilation process, even though both of them had actively served Germany in World War One.

However, the Siberian and Soviet soldiers conquering Berlin in April 1945 did not acknowledge my sister as a victim of Nazi persecution and certainly did not question her about any party affiliation. More than a dozen of them gangraped her after Berlin's surrender until one of the Russian officers, who spoke German, overheard my sister's tearful pleas to stop them from violating her and he became her protector after listening to her tale of Nazi persecution and the deportation of our parents. (At that time their fate was still unknown to Annemie.)

One of her Jewish Berlin acquaintances, Fedor Bruck, also emigrated to the United States a year or so after her arrival in New York. He was about ten years older than she and had worked in Berlin as a dentist im the 1920s and 1930s until going underground himself, like Annemie during the war, and he also survived the war in the German capital.

To his surprise, in 1945, the Russian occupation forces found his name in the files of Dr.Blaschke, who happened to be a colleague of his and the personal dentist of Adolf Hitler, and now the Soviets ordered Fedor to examine the X-rays they had found among the medical files and compare those X-ray plates of Dr.Blaschke's, who could not be located at the time, with the scorched body, including a jawful of teeth they had dug up from Hitler's Chancellery grounds a few weeks earlier. In their presence,

Fedor could identify the lower jaw with the X-rays the Russians had brought along for his examination, and this finally established the fact that the head discovered by the Red Army actually happened to be that of the Führer (and not that of a double) and that his death now could be confirmed beyond any shadow of a doubt.

Fedor and I became pretty close friends in New York and we frequented a couple of restaurants on weekends on Broadway around 90th Street. But somehow he lacked the renewed mental energy to resume his dental studies and profession in the U.S. and for a number of years he first became a nightwatchman at the world-famous River-side Cathedral and then at a church, St. Bartholomew's, near 50th Street on the East-side, where I took his place a few times and had to punch a bell, linked to a police station, every hour while he was entertaining a girlfriend in his apartment, but finally he ended up as a toll collector on the New Jersey Turnpike in the mid-1950s. Both Annemie and I lost touch with him when he moved to New Jersey to be closer to his job and a couple of times we actually did meet him at his job as a toll clerk when Annemie's husband, Joe Klimmeck, drove us in his brandnew Dodge Dart to New Jersey for a Sunday outing. After 1960 we lost all contact with Fedor and he never again got in touch with us either.

Annemie regretted this loss of an old friend, but her hard life had steeled her to surviving this latest disappointment as well. That she came out of the hellish World War and the Holocaust nightmare sane and optimistic as well as full of life, armed with the psychologically indefatigable strength of a sound character I have never encountered in anyone else, shows the prodigeousness and indestructible grandeur of her spirit and temperament. No wonder, I still mourn this sweet and gentle sister of mine almost forty years after her untimely and cruel death from cancer

in 1964 every single day of my life.

About ten years earlier,in 1953,though, she had helped to provide an affidavit for an acquaintance of hers, Jochen (Joe) Klimmeck, whose mother, Dora Klimmeck, a long-time friend of our mother, had risked her own life during the war as an anti-Nazi by helping Annemie to hide in several places, among them a Berlin garden colony, where my sister was sometimes completely cut off for long periods of time from all human contact and where she shivered day and night in the most bitter winter-weather on record in an unheated one-room summer bungalow, although Dora and Joe always helped her out secretly at night with part of their own meager food rations. This lone refuge, probably more than any other, was responsible for Annemie surviving most of the horrors of Nazi persecution.

Yet later she did succeed in obtaining some counterfeit documents, declaring her to be a pure "Aryan" citizen of Berlin, which in turn helped to save her from arrest by the Gestapo in 1943 when that Nazi secret-service organization repeatedly stopped pedestrians on Berlin's streets or conducted razzias in airraid shelters to check on the papers of those seeking refuge from Allied bombers during actual airraids.

Actually, before "diving" underground, Annemie tried to persuade our mother to risk this admittedly dangerous avenue of refuge with forged identity cards (being seized with them meant almost immediate execution once their counterfeit status had been established), but our mother was convinced,like so many others,that being deported by the Nazis would amount to little more than some forced labor in far-off factories or being sent on the land, performing a number of agricultural duties, which the Nazis actually informed the Jewish prisoners would be in store for them.

Well, Annemie didn't buy it. An anti-Nazi German soldier on leave from the Russian front had told her that every day Jews and non-Aryans were being murdered by the thousands in East European extermination camps. That soldier, not surprisingly, had turned out to be what in Nazi terminology was referred to as a "Mischling," a German or Austrian who, according to the 1935 Nuremberg racial laws, had only one or two Jewish grandparents, and some of these Mischlinge were drafted into the regular German armed services. In fact, Hitler himself had glanced at thousands of their photos and decided on the spot who among them he considered to be sufficiently Aryan-looking to serve in his army, and which were to be sent to concentration camps.

The best-known of these Mischlinge actually became a Field Marshal in Göring's Luftwaffe, Erhard Milch, and a handful of them could even serve in the SS. An interview with some of these surviving half-Aryan soldiers on NBC's "Dateline" on April 9, 2002, demonstrated how the Nazi army was well aware of the atrocities being committed by Hilter's "Einsatzgruppen" (extermination squads - and, later, regular German troops) in their successful mass-slaughter of Europe's Jews in Poland and the Soviet Union while Bryan Mark Rigg goes into more documentary detail about the above in his book "Hitler's Jewish Soldiers."

Some of the other "Undesirables" survived the war, including, of course, my sister. But what about our mother? (My father, being paralyzed by his 1936 stroke, was in the Nazi lexicon a "sure gonner," regardless of his bravery and the patriotic duties he had performed during World War I on Germany's side. So the Nazis simply exterminated him.)

And our mother? God would look after her, Annemie was convinced. No harm would come to decent, patriotic people; especially not to women. Somehow, Annemie felt sure that my mother would pull through regardless of the fate that befell other Nazi-held prisoners.

Finally, however, an hour before she was arrested by the Gestapo on February 21 or 22, 1943, our mother sent a brief note to my aunt, Lotte Fraenkel, in Hamburg, that said: "Now they come to arrest me. My children are safe. Pray for me. Farewell."

Of course, her trust in God and the Nazi regime was completely misplaced and she was gassed in Auschwitz the following year, in November 1944.

For helping to save my sister's life during the war, I will always be grateful to Dora Klimmeck. And when Dora died of medical complications resulting from her diabetes in 1952, Annemie and Ilse arranged for Joe Klimmeck, Dora's son, to come to the United States in 1953 (where he still lives in San Rafael, California) and two years later, in October 1955, Annemie and Joe were married in New York, with me being the best man.

Unfortunately, her good friend Ilse, with whom she had shared so many hardships during and after the war, felt slighted or took umbrage at this marital union and in the end she departed, withdrawing to Florida, despite my sister's most heartbreaking pleas to stay with them in New York. Even so, Annemie kept in touch with Ilse by mail and phone, learning that she had found a job in Miami as a waitress. But ultimately, in 1958, Ilse vanished altogether from sight, from our circle of close friends, leaving no forwarding address, and in spite of our hiring a detective-tracing service we could never discover, to Annemie's great regret, whatever had happened to Ilse or where she had finally settled.

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But Annemie did return to her native Berlin once more, in August 1961, this time accompanied by Joe, [illegible] and in Berlin they visited old friends and, a week later, our two cousins Ilse and Ursula Fraenkel in Hamburg. While she and Joe were staying in Berlin they happened to witness the erection of the Soviet-built Berlin Wall on August 14, 1961, the meaning of which at that initial stage was still a mystery to Annemie and Joe and, equally at first, to the Western powers.

Ever since 1957, when Annemie moved with Joe to the Queens district of Jackson Heights, sharing the same apartment building with, first, my wife Myrtil and me, and, later, with my second wife Ursula, she always made it a rule that, after work, we have supper with her and Joe on weekdays, which she prepared for all of us and also brought us even closer together.

Annemie's cancer started out quite insidiously in February 1964. My pregnant wife Ursula and I had been treated by Joe and Annemie in their Dodge Dart to a ride into the country just to get away for a few hours from the city. It happened to be a sunny but rather cool winter Sunday afternoon. Joe turned on the heater in the car and Annemie rolled down the window a bit on her right side, giving all of us some much needed fresh air.

Later that evening, while all of us enjoyed our usual supper at her home, Annemie started complaining of some pain in her right shoulder. I dismissed it at once as probably being due to the icy draft when she had opened the car-window earlier in the afternoon, and we forgot all about her grievance, even though she continued to massage her offending shoulderblade throughout the evening.

For weeks and weeks after that initial twinge of pain, the spasm simply would not let up; at the same time it did not deteriorate either, and since Annemie felt she could live with this nagging inconvenience, she tried to ignore it and rarely brought it up again.

Around the beginning of summer, my increasingly pregnant wife

and I went to the Recreation Farm in Fosterdale near Monticello, New York, to spend a couple of weeks vacation there in the healthy country air prior to the birth of the baby. Annemie and Joe had taken us there in their Dodge and promised to pick us up again in two weeks.

But then, all of a sudden, after a week already, Joe arrived in Fosterdale and told us that Annemie's condition had so deteriorated that the last few days she was actually screaming in agony in spite of all the painkillers she had taken and Joe was forced to take her to the University Medical Center on 29th Street and First Avenue,

Here her condition, after several tests, was diagnosed as bone cancer. This verdict came as a terrible blow to me. I asked Joe whether he had learned from the doctors meanwhile what the outlook was and he told us point-blank that nothing could be done about it and that for the most part now she was living on morphine to still the unbearable pain, and even more unsettling that the doctors could not predict how much longer she would live; it could be six months or a year at the most.

For me to imagine life without my sister was almost like a death sentence for myself. First my beloved mother and father cruelly taken from us because of Hitler's insanity,and now the last member of my immediate family was slowly being tortured to death by the hand of God.

To my everlasting disgrace and remorse, I visited my beloved sister only every other day in the hospital after work instead of daily because I was so exhausted from my new job at Sterling Publishing Company as the new publicity director of the "Guinness Book of World Records." However, my wife Ursula, who was already seven months pregnant at the time, visited Annemie virtually every single day at the hospital and looked after her in the best Samaritan

and warmhearted manner imaginable.

Another reason I did not visit Annemie every day was her pitiful appearance. She was losing more and more weight by the day and could hardly swallow anything any more; only the vitamin-rich liquids the nurses fed her through some intravenous feeding tubes kept the dying body alive. The cancer had ravenously devoured her muscles, her surplus flesh, and her arms soon assumed the appearance of elongated matchsticks.

So I sat down at her bedside one evening in September 1964 and, weeping bitterly, cursed the Supreme Lord, for being such a monstrous sadist in torturing my darling sister to death when He had already done nothing to save the rest of my family during the Holocaust.The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh away. But why so cruelly? Wasn't He supposed to be All-Merciful?

As a postscript I must add that a few years after Annemie's death at the age of 51, my brother-in-law, Joe, married one of her best friends, Ursula (Uschi) Dosmar, with whom Annemie had also lived underground in Berlin during the war, and she, too, perished of cancer, in 1980.

BIRTH IN AUGUST, DEATH IN SEPTEMBER.(1964)

When I arrived in my office at Sterling Publishing Company the morning of August 10, 1964, my boss's father-in-law, Mr. Strauss, who at the age of eighty was still working there full-time and one of the neatest dressers I ever met, informed me that I should call two book jobbers, Baker & Taylor and Bro Dart about some purchase orders, and as an afterthought he added that a hospital in Jackson Heights had informed him at 8:40 that morning to relay the message to me that my wife Ursula had just given birth to a boy. Overjoyed by this/latter news, I asked the head of Sterling, David A.Boehm, if I'd be allowed by him to be with my wife that day and was told that I could leave the office an hour before the rest of the staff, at 4 p.m.,-and take the next day off, with pay. Mr.Boehm proved to be right in this decision because my wife still seemed so exhausted from giving birth to our son, that even in the late afternoon she could hardly gather the strength to speak to me above a whisper.On top of it,at that late hour,she still had not been shown our son.

Joe, my brother-in-law, had taken us in his Dodge Dart to the Physicians Hospital in Jackson Heights at five in the morning when Ursula woke with the most tremendous labor pains. We were grateful that the amniotic water bag had not broken yet and Joe and I could deliver her safely to the maternity ward. Nevertheless, once there, she started vomiting after a nurse had sat her gently into a wheelchair and was rolling her down a long corridor. Joe and I followed them, but we were told at once to return home or go to work since it might take hours , even the entire day, until the baby was born. Consequently,we did return home,had breakfast together and went to our respective places of employment, where I was immediately informed about

the boy's birth on my arrival.

That evening, Joe and I visited my wife and we were permitted to glance through a huge window, viewing at least half-a-dozen newborn babies bundled up in their tiny cribs. My son Stephen was pointed out to me and I broke into a cold sweat.

Stephen's cheeks and forehead were Burgundy-red and his head much larger than that of the other babies. Somehow I could not shake the idea, the fear, that Ursel had given birth to an abnormal, retarded baby with water on the brain, and even Joe seemed to be shocked by Stephen's appearance. Tears brimmed in my eyes and I felt like screaming out loud at God why He would want to rip the life out of my beloved sister prematurely and on top of it now punish me further with a hydrocephalous child.

Tremulously, I approached a nurse and explained my fears to her. She assured me that the baby was absolutely normal and that the size of his head would shrink overnight as would the wine-red color of his cheeks. Moreover, the nurse tried to assure me, the strenuous effort of leaving the birth canal resulted in the baby's total exhaustion, his deep sleep at present, and that the red cheeks and enlarged cranium would dwindle to a normal shape and color by next day.

I did not believe her and imagined already that the doctors would confirm my worst fears the following day and inform me that the being Ursel and I had brought to life would have to spend the rest of his days at Bellevue in the ward of the totally insane.

Although I had been given the day off the following day, I was scared to death to pay a visit to the hospital, literally fearing the sight of my son's skull, which I already imagined to resemble the frightening appearance of Charles Laughton in "The Hunchback of Notre Dame." Only at around tea time did I venture to

make my appearance at the clinic. Even before heading for my wife's recovery room, I made a beeline for the display window, where I had last seen my son with his grotesquely large head,but to my surprise did not find him among the half-dozen newborns. Immediately I jumped to the conclusion that he had died during the day of hydrocephalus,and again tears welled in my eyes.

What was I going to tell my wife? Did she already know?

Hesitantly, I approached her hospital room and on entering it, I saw Ursel sitting up in bed, the baby nestled in her arms and breast-feeving it. A big happy grin greeted me, and although her nursing our child filled me with great joy, the greatest miracle was the size of the boy's head. In the first twenty-four hours of his life, it had shrunk from its gargantuan balloon-size to a perfectly normal head that was furthermore enhanced by the deep concentration with which he drank thirstily from his mother's breast. His almost wine-red facial color had faded to a normal healthy pink,and within seconds of my arrival, his tiny ham-tinted hands still clutching his mother's breast, both eyes gradually closed and he fell asleep. The nurse this time placed him in a small bassinet next to my wife's bed and I hugged her for presenting me with such a handsome baby-boy.

Sadly,though, the joy of this addition to the Kuttner family was darkened by the horrible realization that my darling sister Annemarie was dying of bone cancer only a few miles away in a Manhattan hospital. Why did the Lord Yahweh play this cruel joke on me? If she had to die, why not peacefully instead of having Him torture her with firered tongs. Why,Almighty? Why,O Lord? Why, Allah? Why, Vishnu? Why, Jehovah? Why, when my sister had suffered so much in her short life: the divorce of our parents,losing them in the Holocaust, hunted by the Nazis during World War II in Berlin,

raped by a dozen Russians after they had seized Berlin, the ever-more troubling curvature of her spine and its constant, agonizing pain, and finally the dreadful unrelenting bone cancer that caused her to scream in agony day and night until she had to be delivered up to the cancer ward of the New York University Medical Center, where she died a horrible death on September 22, 1964 at the age of fifty-one. Where did He show her an ounce of mercy?

The last time I saw my sister thirty hours before she died, I hardly recognized her. Her body was skin and bones, a sweating death skull wrapped in gray skin, her pillow constantly damp from perspiration, from the effort to survive for a few days longer the battle with that heinous cancer. ~~Her dull, once so lustrous dark brown eyes, now lay sunken deep in their sockets.~~ Her beautiful firm lips were thin and colorless, and the pillow on which her parched skull rested in the dampness of her ceaseless sweat was full of the beautiful hair that kept falling out in large indifferent clusters and lay there like abandoned feathers framing her shrivelled face.

The beastly cancer had devoured all her muscles, most of her flesh, and her body had assumed the looks of a breathing skeleton. The beautiful once so rosy complexion was turning rapidly into an iron-gray hairless skull of death with its skin so tightly wrapped over the cheekbones that those bones actually pierced the pergamoneous skin and sprouted tiny fissures, like tributaries on a map, and rivulets of the blood's confluence were ketchupy-red where the skin had already been penetrated by the protruding bones.

Even worse, her lively dark-brown eyes now lay sunken lifelessly in their deep shadowy sockets and gazed up at me with a hopeless question she no longer had the strength to articulate. Her voice was an inaudible whisper. Her wasted body screamed out to die.

Were the last few hours of her short life to be desecrated by

the cruel hand of God? What did He try to prove by torturing my dying sister who had suffered so much in her life, especially in her final hours? Where was the merciful Supreme Being one heard so much about? But as usual God preferred to remain silent.

On September 20, 1964 (my forty-second birthday), the last time I ever saw Annemie, her pale lips pleaded with me in an almost inaudible whisper for something to drink. I gently planted the spetubular cial drinking utensil to her mouth, but the muscles in her lips simply could no longer summon the strength to suck up the liquid her parched body so desperately needed, and the tiny gulps of water that landed in her emaciated throat almost choked the dying woman as she futilely attempted to swallow it. She struggled to sit up to expel the foreign matter of liquid that she could not force down and she hauled it up with some slimy sour-smelling substance that had been brought up from a body that no longer worked properly, in fact rebelled against being kept alive and refused to accept any life-sustaining matter, even anything as simple as the refreshing coolness of water.

Tears of hopelessness and exhaustion, of agony and the knowledge that she was at the end of her life's journey, filled her eyes and rolled down her parched bony cheeks. Again she tried to sit up in an attempt to ease her dismal condition, but her skeletal frame collapsed back on the damp hair-strewn pillow and a deep shuddering sob wracked her emaciated being.

I could no longer bear to witness this sadistic spectacle that God was wreaking upon my sister and was using now as a spectacular circus show for my tear- drenched eyes. I rushed out of the hospital room and started to weep, to sob uncontrollably, cursing God that he would treat my wonderful gentle sister in such a bestial manner.

I was still shrouded in the suffocating cocoon of grieving this

horrible exit of my sister's life when a nurse came rushing down the corridor and demanded that I be quiet and stop crying like a baby in the terminal cancer ward. When I explained to her between gulping sobs that my sister was dying in the room behind me, suffering untold agonies, she insisted in a shrill commanding voice that I control myself and behave like a man, and that my sister was dying a glorious death which I had no right to interrupt with my hysterical presence.

Seeing my agony, my love for my dying sister demeaned and desecrated by these sadistic indifferent words, this merciless command for turning off my grief and replacing it immediately with icy unconcern and stoic silence or indifference, caused me to fly into a savage rage and within a milli-second I converted my normally sympathetic and reserved nature, transforming it into a to-me totally unfamiliar manic fury, that I simply could not help it but to swing out blindly with my right arm, smashing my fist three, four, five times with such force into the nurse's face that she fell headlong into the wall behind her, screaming out in shock and pain while I cursed her with every God-given expletive under the sun. I had gone berserk.

In an instant, nurses and male orderlies appeared from nowhere, running down the long white corridor, trying to restrain me, but in my wild and totally uncontrolled maniacal wrath I pushed them brusquely aside, feeling none of their blows, and continued smashing my fists into the nurse's face and chest. Only the arrival and constraint of my best friend, my grieving brother-in-law Joe, who had been in a bathroom, finally calmed me down.

One of the doctors insisted that I leave the premises immediately without ever trying to find out what had caused this outburst, and when I yelled at him why the hospital was remiss in giving my

sister some painkillers to alleviate her agony, a few orderlies hurled themselves anew on me and tried to evict me without ever responding to my query. This insensitivity and refusal even to respond to a harmless medical enquiry gave me one last thrust of superhuman strength and I hurled myself anew on the quartet of orderlies, kicking, screaming, biting them when somebody all of a sudden punched me repeatedly in the face until blood spurted from my nose and my mouth and I crashed headlong into the wall behind me.

I collapsed on the floor, where I was kicked over and over by the orderlies until I lay there completely motionless. The orderlies disappeared within seconds, running down a long hospital corridor, and I clambered to my feet and staggered back into my dying sister's room. Shaking all over and bleeding profusely, I kissed her closed eyelids and her dry colorless lips ~~xxxxxxx~~ ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ for the last time, even her bony shoulder blades.

Joe was in a state of shock at my behavior and took me home in his car, where I went to bed immediately, refusing to wash myself, still sensing the dying fragrance of my sister on my lips and in my nostrils.

Within seconds I fell asleep, totally exhausted, physically and psychologically, but two nights after that debacle I was woken by a telephone call at around four in the morning. It was Joe, who had just been informed that Annemie had succumbed an hour earlier.

Joe and I rushed in his car to the hospital and found Annemie's mattress already rolled up and two nurses aids disinfecting her room and mopping the floor. One of them asked us whether we wanted to see Annemie's body in the morgue, but I decided (with Joe's agreement) against it, because - like Joe - I wanted to remember her only alive for the rest of my life.

We had her cremated the following day and her ashes dispersed over the Atlantic with those of others who had passed on that week.

The memory of her love, her beauty, her ever-ready help, is as strong with me today, about forty years later, as it was the day she had died.

Memories that make no headlines or cinematographic adventure series, just simple lifetime remembrances, still haunt me, like, for example, the occasion when I, aged thirteen, visited the 1936 Olympic Games with my sister and mother in Berlin, and we witnessed Hitler refusing to shake the hand of the Games' African-American hero, Jesse Owens, even after winning four gold medals. One of my personal trophies of these Games happened to be the autograph that Jesse Owens gave Annemie and me near Berlin's Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church, where we had posted ourselves with my friends Atti Speyer and Klaus Brockerhoff in the hope of cornering as many Olympic autographs as possible. Annemie told me after the war that the autograph was burned during an airraid on Berlin. The memory of Annemie, and of all my loved ones, however, will never perish.

AND BABY MAKES THREE. (1964)

In August 1961, Annemie and Joe decided to visit friends in Berlin, who my sister had known since childhood. Coincidentally, it happened to be the week the Soviet Russians began to erect the infamous Berlin Wall. At the time, Annemie and Joe, like the rest of the world, did not yet grasp the significance of the wall and its eventual extension, separating East and West Germany, but its ultimate purpose, of course, was to stem the flow of East Germans out of their paradise to the West.

As a consequence, this 1961 visit to the German capital was shortened and they took a train from Berlin to Hamburg, where they visited Annemie's cousins Ulla Fraenkel and Ilse Jochimsen, the daughters of Max Fraenkel, the brother of our mother. He had committed suicide in Hamburg in 1938, because the Nazis would no longer let him treat Christian patients, which prevented him from supporting his family.

Although Ilse had been married to her former school teacher, Heinrich Jochimsen, she was now widowed and employed as a nurse in the terminal cancer ward of a Hamburg hospital. One of Ilse's patients there had been a Frau Timmermann, who had recently died of cancer and left a daughter - Ursula - behind. Ursula was born in Hamburg in 1942 and as a teenager felt overwhelmed by the sudden death of her mother. Her father had deserted Ursula's mother as soon as he had learned of her pregnancy, which meant that Ursula now was completely alone and emotionally drained by this parental loss.

My cousin Ilse, however, realized that Ursula needed assistance - psychologically as well as financially - and she took it upon herself to look after her new ward as much as she could. Although Ursula still kept the Hamburg apartment where she had lived with her mother,

Ilse made it her mission to do everything in her power to take care of her.

It happened to be on one of those occasions when my sister and her husband were visiting Ilse in Hamburg in August of 1961 that they made their / personal acquaintance with Ursula. In the course of their conversation, Ursula (whom everybody called Ursel) confided to Annemie that it was her greatest wish to emigrate to the United States. She did not speak any English but was young enough to pick up that language in a short time.

Annemie and Joe decided immediately to help Ursel to come to the United States by providing an affidavit for her, and when they returned from Europe they informed me of their decision, telling me that at first they would be Ursel's host in their three-room Jackson Heights apartment until she had found a job and was solvent enough to find her own accomodation.

Since I had just gone through the psychological torture of a separation and divorce from Myrtil, I did not express much interest in the arrival of Annemie's ward, but I did promise my sister and brother-in-law that I would also do my part in making the new immigrant girl feel at home and welcome in our households. I was almost exactly twenty years older than Ursel and certainly did not have the slightest intention of getting romantically involved with anybody at that juncture so short after my divorce. I had taken a one-room bachelor-studio apartment in the house next to Annemie's and Joe's place and was trying my darndest to make a name for myself as an author with a new novel I had started.

Moreover, I had recently been employed by a New York publisher - Sterling Publishing Company - and was more interested in devoting my surplus energy to the job and my own writing rather than a new romance. Nevertheless, I promised Annemie to show Ursel New York on

weekends, and since Joe had recently bought a Dodge Dart we also planned to take weekend trips outside New York in the warmer days to come to introduce Ursel to the neighboring countryside.

Early in 1963, Ursel finally arrived in the States. Since I always had my dinner at night with Annemie and Joe in their apartment next door to mine, it was in their place that I first met Ursel. For some reason we did not hit it off at all, although the cause of our remoteness always escaped me. We were polite in each other's company, quite friendly, but were aware of our aloofness and distance. Even though I tried to break the ice with smalltalk (in German), I could not do so, hard as I tried. She was a tall, attractive woman about twenty years old when she arrived in the States, but somehow our behavior, social contact, appeared stiff and not too communicative in each other's presence.

However, over the next few evenings our distance from one another gradually took a turn for the better, to become less self-conscious, and slowly our conversation became more animated and began to hone in on more personal matters. To me the most important thing was that Ursel would not become a burden to my sister and Joe and not a disappointment. Fortunately, Ursel never turned out to become either. I had the feeling that Ursel grew increasingly close to Annemie as she did to Joe and even to their lovable dog Rusty, who returned his affection lavishly to anybody entering my sister's apartment.

As promised, I took Ursel out on Saturdays and showed her New York while on Sundays Joe lavished his free time on trips in his car.

Moreover, it fell to me to teach Ursel as much English as possible in the evenings, which she absorbed with great enthusiasm. On top of it, she had no difficulty finding a job at the German-American optician and instrument maker Carl Zeiss on Fifth Ave-

nue and 41st Street. Having taken lessons shortly before her employment at Zeiss in German-English shorthand, her knowledge of this rather complex secretarial craft helped her to make good progress in her new office. In the evening we still continued to practice her shorthand craft: I dictated letters in English and German and she began to take my dictation down faster and faster. Not only did she turn out to become an excellent student but an increasingly joyful person to be around. She had gained self-confidence, being around people who she could feel warmly appreciated her presence. Her English improved by leaps and bounds; she was making many friends at her office, in particular with another Hamburg co-worker of hers, Waltraud Hixius, who just then was going through a rather unfortunate relationship with a young man living across the street from us. (Years later, my ever-loyal friend Waltraud, an attractive and highly intelligent woman the same age as Ursel, met and married a wonderful, brilliant botanist - Roger Walter - who became a college professor in upstate New York, and even today, almost forty years later, I still spend virtually every Christmas with this lovely and loving couple in their beautiful house in the New York suburb of Armonk.)

It also developed that Ursel and Waltraud had met in the past, namely at their last German residence, in Hamburg, where both of them had joined the same rowing club a couple of years earlier. Another young woman at Zeiss proved to be a charming blonde named Elsbeth, also from Hamburg, and she, too, soon fell in love. Her boyfriend, Joe Catalano, had recently come to the States from Italy. When a couple of years later, Ursel invited all these people to our apartment in Jackson Heights, Joe turned out to be so taciturn throughout that first dinner party that none of us ever heard his voice and we did not even know whether he spoke or understood enough English to join in a conversation.

However, when all of us visited Elsbeth and Joe at their apartment several weeks later, he turned out to be a brilliant conversationalist with a dry wit, who was furthermore graced with a magnificent baritone voice, which he displayed superbly at a local choral society. What is more, his English proved to be really good but also devoid of the heavy Italian accent asspciated with some of the cast members in the "Godfather" movies.

We became a sextet of truly good friends, meeting regularly at each others' homes. Some time later Elsbeth married Joe and they soon tried to make a living in - of all places - Nice, France, opening their own photo store there, and when this endeavor collapsed, they returned to the States and opened a photo store near New York but finally settled in Florida, trying to make a living in the Sunshine State, specializing in three-dimensional photo processing.

One day, in the late 1990s, Elsbeth was crossing the street, with Joe walking behind her, when a car struck Joe at full speed, killing him instantly. Elsbeth had become a widow in her early fifties, and is still working there, in Palm Coast, in a real state office.

Even before we were married, Ursel and I travelled extensively, as far south as Florida and north as Vermont and we also spent some heavenly winter and summer days at the Recreation Farm in Fosterdale, near Monticello (N.Y.), where one day, in the summer of 1964, when Ursel was already eight months pregnant, my brother-in-law Joe Klimmeck made an unexpected appearance and informed us that my darling sister Annemie was dying of cancer and did not have much longer to live!

A week or two later, our son Stephen was born in Jackson Heights, on August 10, 1964, and a month after that Annemie died on September 22 of bone cancer, a horrible death.

Death, the Great Equalizer, does not give a damn about our pleas or listen to our quiet, tearful prayers. And so we go on plodding and plotting while sobs and laughter mingle with our thoughts of hate and love and level the rocky road fate has destined for us to travel on.

About a year after Annemie's burial at sea, Ursel returned to work at Zeiss, leaving our one-year-old son at a nearby nursery, where I deposited him in the mornings before setting off to work, A few years later my brother-in-law Joe was transferred by IBM to San Francisco. He had meanwhile married one of Annemie's best girlfriends, Ursula "Uschi" Dosmar, whom I knew from England, where I had met her after the war. Joe and Uschi found a lovely house on the outskirts of the Northern Californian town of San Rafael, and after Ursel and I separated in 1969 and she had moved to Silver Spring, Maryland, where she continued to work for Zeiss and we had found a comfortable home for her nearby, I made a point of visiting our five-year-old son Stephen there by train, and later by plane, on weekends twice a month. Here we stayed at the Silver Spring Holiday Inn, enjoying the sights together of Washington museums, theaters, movies and especially its historical points of attraction.

A year later, Ursel, who generously agreed that I send her only monthly payments of child support (which I actually did every January for the entire year) decided that it might be better for Stephen to spend a year or so with Joe and Uschi in their Californian villa outside San Rafael's hustle-bustle until she could find some more permanent roots of her own in Maryland.

For a couple of weeks that summer I visited Stephen during my vacation in San Rafael, taking the rather comfortable Zephyr train for three days from New York to California, and here Joe took all of us for long drives along the beautiful northern California coast.

To my surprise Stephen had adjusted amazingly well to the separation from me a year or two earlier and now from his mother. He loved the beautiful garden in the back of Joe's house, where a swing and a slide had been installed for him, and he could invite the many friends he was making at the local kindergarten diagonally across the street from his house, so that the separation from his immediate family did not appear to faze him.

Still, I will never forget his spasm of inconsolable sobs when he saw me off on the train on my way back east, although my frequent phone calls to him after my return to New York and the wonderful parental treatment he received from Joe and Uschi not only calmed him down but actually turned him into a loving and lovable boy, whose character, nature and intelligence had virtually never caused me any grief but mostly only joy and pride. In San Rafael, he continued to make great progress in kindergarten as quite an accomplished finger-paint artist. (To our great shock, all of us learned in 1980, that Joe's wife Uschi, like Annemie, had fallen victim to cancer and now widowed Joe for the second time. He never remarried, but still lives in the same San Rafael home.)

A few years later, Ursel married somebody else and had her second child, a girl, Elena, who today is an officer with the Washington, D.C. police department, where she met and married a colleague of hers. Unfortunately, Ursel's second marriage also broke up and today she is happily married to her third husband, Morton Taub, and works for his enterprise in Venice, Florida. For years Ursel had suffered from chronic pains in her back and she hoped that the heat of the Florida sun would do her a world of good. She always was a hardworking, honest and decent woman, who converted to Judaism when she married her second husband, and she, like my first wife Myrtil, who also converted to Judaism before her second marriage,

deserves nothing but the best.

Again: I regret that also my second marriage - the union with Ursel - foundered, the reason being my passion for writing and the success I craved that not only evaded me but sctually seemed to surpass my love for my wife. And yet, when Ursel and I parted in New York with a final 1969 embrace in our Jackson Heights apartment, tears welled in the eyes of both of us, and today, it must be emphasized, I wish nothing but the best for her and for Myrtil, who at one time had both been godsends to me.

As a postscript, in all fairness I must also point out, the only occurrence that still rankles in my guts decades after the end of our relationship is the fact that Ursel took it upon herself to play judge, jury and executioner in determining the worthiness of about two dozen of my huge canvas 1950s oil paintings, when, without consulting me, she had secretly got rid of them, put them on the street to be collected with the garbage bags one evening while I was not at home.

Even so, as a matter of small consolation to me, I still own to this day the color slides I had taken of each of these 20" x 26" objets d'art immediately after their completion - regardless of whether it happened to be a still life, an urban scene or landscape. Only four of these originals still exist, including the only abstract I ever painted, and they hang in my studio apartment now.

Somehow I could suddenly understand, and feel, the pain of the Jewish artists whose works had been publicly burned by the Nazis in a large Berlin bonfire shortly after Hitler had come to power in 1933. On a more personal note: that 1960s destruction of my oils proved to be the first serious crack in the sacred concrete foundation of our marriage.

LOVES THAT DID NOT LAST LONG. (1933)

As the title of this chapter suggests, none of the wonderful women I fell in love with stuck it out with me for more than a few years. In most cases I have to blame myself more than the women for these short-lived amorous interludes.

Technically speaking, my first love, or puppy love, centered on the daughter of a Hamburg bar owner, Erika Kempp (or was it Kamp?), who, like me, had just reached her eleventh birthday in the fall of 1933 and happened to live a couple of blocks from my grandmother, whom I frequently visited during my school vacations and who expressed her scorn for my desire to play with a child of a "lower classes" saloon keeper. Her frowning opprobrium, however, had no effect on the primary goal of my oddly aroused affections.

Erika was not a particularly beautiful girl, sporting two long pig-tails and thick-lensed spectacles, but at least she held my hands when we played hide-and-seek on the street and I had found her hiding place and she smiled at me, which no other girl had ever done. I was smitten by that friendly gesture and her warm grasp of my hands, which always sent a warm shuddering sensation through my entire body, although it could not be considered sensual or even sexual at my young age.

On one occasion, when I picked a bunch of wild flowers from the garden colony across the street, called Braamkamp, her father visibly frowned upon this premature gesture or expression of puppy love. This frown, of course, may also have been motivated by the fact that he knew about my non-Aryan heritage, which surely rubbed him the wrong way since he was a man of a few words and one wooden leg (he had lost his right leg in World War I), but even more important, he also happened to be a passionate member of the Nazi Party.

He had already joined it in the 1920s - - a fact he liked to visibly display by wearing the gold-crested Nazi Party badge in his lapel, which demonstrated that he was one of the first thousand members of Hitler's SA organization. Never,though,did he pass any anti-Semitic remarks in my presence and he always bowed extravagantly whenever my old grandmother happened to pass his bar, but then a couple of years later he sold the bar and both he and Erika moved to another German city to vanish forever from my life.

In Nazi Germany, for Jews and non-Aryans even to be in love with a non-Jewish or Aryan partner was not only frowned upon by Hitler's government circles but strictly "verboten" and publicized as "Rassenschande" (racial disgrace). Since I was only sixteen years old when I had to leave the Third Reich in 1939, my amatory experiences there proved to be minimal and rather tame by adult standards, except for the occasion when I had a terrible crush on the lovely teenage girl who portrayed Maria in the 1938 Christmas play in which I acted the role of one of the Wise Men in Berlin's Hohenzollern Platz Church. I loved acting and would have played any part in church,synagogue or mosque. (See my chapter "Having a Crush on the Mother of Jesus" Page 38) But because the Nazi government did not consider me anything but Jewish, these two asexual puppy loves still were fraught with great danger, regardless of whether I was fourteen or sixty-four.

Sylvia (1945)

The reverse could be said for my second great love,Sylvia Berliner, who happened to be a Jewish co-worker of mine as a secretary in London's Bloomsbury House; here she was employed as the Girl Friday of Mrs. Hardisty, the head of the organization,looking after refugee boys and girls,like myself, from Nazi Germany and Austria in England.

Sylvia can only be described as a particularly lovely and loving girl in her mid-twenties, jolly and full of the most lively spirits, just a year younger than me, and we spent every available free moment together on weekends, going to music-hall revues in Camden Town and to the "flicks" on Leicester Square while our summer and autumn outings were spent in London's beautiful surroundings like Hampton Court, Epping Forest, Hertford, Windsor, Chatham, etc. Mostly on Sundays we met early in the morning, fully armed with unrationed sandwiches, cucumbers, water-cress, some fruit and a thermos flask containing cold juice. That last year of World War II we did have to learn to evade the bombs raining down on London, especially the V1 and V2 Flying Bombs (the latter could hardly be dodged since there was no advance-warning sound after August 1944 of their approach), which did enormous damage to the British capital and kept Londoners awake most nights throughout the summer, fall and winter of 1944. To most Londoners the V1 - or "doodlebugs" as they were referred to in England - seemed to be the more frightening weapon (the brainchild, with the V2, of Wernher von Braun, who later joined the moon-landing project in the U.S.), because once its engine was turned off, Londoners had exactly seven seconds to find shelter before its explosive force had a chance to kill or maim dozens of victims on the ground. (See my chapter "Doodlebugs Were No Laughing Matter", page 159)

Two days after I had been injured in London by one of those Flying V1 Bombs on December 14, 1944 near High Holborn, Sylvia took me to St.Paul's Cathedral, which was firmly sandbagged outside and even inside the church, and with her by my side, both of us thanked God that He had let me survive that part of the Nazi blitz with a rather negligible wound. Both Sylvia and I felt at peace in the rather dark December cavern of St.Paul's, and when my lips touched

hers gently in the dim-lit house of worship I could taste the salty tears on her soft cool lips. Her presence and my survival made me feel close to God, even though my heart ached for my family, of whose fate I was still completely unaware. Just sitting there touching my darling Sylvia gave me more of an approach to a religious heaven than all the learned books that try to lassoo the unwary into the net of their sectarian beliefs and faiths.

Although I could never persuade Sylvia to have sexual relations with me since she had promised her parents only to surrender her body to a man of her own Mosaic faith after she had married him, she proved to be one of the great loves of my life.

In fact, I can still feel the sting of her hot tears on my cheeks when she finally kissed me good-bye just before I left London on a train from Liverpool Station that would take me to my port of departure, Harwich, in November 1947 and from there by boat to the New World. As a farewell gift, she presented me with the most beautiful blue sweater she had knitted for me and I wore it for at least a dozen years after my arrival in the States but could not bring myself to discard it, keeping it even, already unwearable, in my chest of drawers until the distance of time imbued me with the peace of mind to bid adieu to it. For a few years we still exchanged letters until I had her news in the early 1950s that she was engaged to a devout young Jew, Harold Paignton, whom she married a year or so later. Only once more, a few years after that message, I received an announcement from her that she had given birth to a baby, but half a century later I cannot even remember whether she had a boy or a girl, who would now be in the fifties.

Oddly enough, the same thing happened to her gorgeous Catholic co-worker in Mrs. Hardisty's office, Rhonda, who had an affair with a married man, although I do not know what happened to either of them after the birth of that baby. But all this happened more than

half a century ago and I often wonder if any of these dear people are still alive or even remember me as distinctly as I recall so many wonderful hours with them. Somewhere I still have a 1947 snapshot taken of all three of us (- Sylvia, Rhonda and me - one sunny lunchtime in London's Bedford Square.

Viola (1954)

The second time I fell head over heels in love in the United States (after my first crush (see p.327)) proved to be a disaster from the outset. I was already in my early thirties in 1954 and employed by Church World Service (CWS) as a social worker, helping Displaced Persons to come to the U.S. I had also just gotten over my first unhappy love affair in this country.

One of the secretaries at CWS was a stunningly beautiful redhead, Viola Campbell, who was about three or four years my junior -- the sort of girl who could have been a typical Goldwyn Folly in the 1930s and 1940s, much to the distress of the attractive Alice Sellman who had been the favorite Jewish girl at CWS prior to Viola's arrival there.

It did not take me long to be enamored of this new red-haired arrival. Beside her spic-and-span appearance, she dressed to the nines without being overly ostentatious in the glamor-kind of fashion. No wonder the office males of all ages, without exception, were inflamed by her erotic appeal and her Vogue-like appearance.

For once, the gods of amour must have smiled at least this time upon me, because for some reason Vi, as everybody called her, visibly displayed an unabashedly unconcealed interest in me. She frequently came to my desk to find out if I had anything interesting to tell her about my experiences involving the new Displaced Persons who had just arrived in this country. And so, one fine day I took my heart into my hands and gathered all my masculine

courage to ask her whether she felt like going to the movies with me. When she said I should try to get some tickets at the Paramount on Times Square for the personal appearance of Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis, my heart sank. It was easier for the proverbial camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for me to obtain a couple of tickets for these two world-class entertainers. However, the equally quoted saying that love(and lust) can make you do anything proved to be true and one Saturday at around five in the morning I ventured to line up for a couple of tickets, which at that time cost me around $7.50 each, a fortune for someone making about forty-five dollars per week.

When the line started moving about five hours later, it still took me until well into the afternoon to reach the box office for the six p.m. performance that day, which also showed a ninety-minute movie (whose title I have completely forgotten) as a sort of an appendix to the Martin-Lewis stage performance. Most likely I was one of the few youngsters lining up who actually preferred the pseudo-drunken singing of Dean Martin to the juvenile clowning of Jerry Lewis.

About half an hour before I reached the box office, Vi finally joined me, fresh and appealing, while I was already quite wilted from hours and hours of being exposed to the inclement weather and the urge to relieve myself. Still, the erotic consequences of my sacrifice, the subsequent sexual favors bestowed upon me by this Irish beauty, were of such high salacious standards that I would have gotten tickets for "Triumph of the Will" to let her quench her sensual thirst on me.

It proved to be especially appealing to both of us to celebrate our trysts in my room on 111th Street near Riverside Drive, where we had the run of the apartment entirely to ourselves since my

landlords, the Klemperers, always spent the summer months in their house just outside Fleischmanns in the Catskills, but when they returned from their summer cottage again in September, our love-making was confined to the comfortable, immaculately kept Queens house near Bliss Street, in which Vi lived with her parents and sister Ginny, who was about four years older than Vi and had an affair of her own with a man going through a divorce. The Campbells were a wonderful, friendly family, but there was one hitch as far as I was concerned: they were devoutly Roman Catholic. Well, devoutly in as much as they went to Mass every Sunday morning, with the two daughters at least going to confession every other week. Somehow, in retrospect, I feel that while we dropped into a lustful bed, Vi isolated her soul joyfully from her body, removing it without my knowledge to a more sacred and secret niche.

When I questioned Vi whether she actually confessed our hot love affair to the priest, she was quite secretive about answering me at first, claiming that she did not want to divulge to anybody what she claimed was only between her and the priest and God. Somehow I could not quite believe that she did confess these sexual encounters every other week to her priest without running into serious difficulties with him and her faith. I told her that it appeared to me rather strange, in that case, to be so selective about her confessing her sins, taking her faith seriously in her own fashion only. But I dropped the subject quickly when I noticed that she felt ill at ease every time I brought up this matter to her. Yet it never fazed her to literally "schlep" me along with her, minutes after our final orgasm in her upstairs bedroom, to early Sunday morning mass at six a.m. in her Queens neighborhood church. Without fail I felt like a wet noodle by those early morning hours since my entire physical strength had been sapped and devoted the previous seven hours to the strenuous but pleasurable art of super-heated lovemaking, and by the time of obligatory divine worship every inch of my exhausted body was crying out for sleep at sunrise.

On top of it, and to my annoyance, on those ecclesiastical occasions, the priest always made it a rule to praise the work and character of the controversial Republican junior Senator from Wisconsin, Joseph R. McCarthy, as though he were the second Christ, and this somehow rubbed me the wrong way, especially after the U.S.Army defense lawyer, Joe Welch, was attacked by him during the Army-McCarthy hearings that were broadcast worldwide. I hated Communism as much as Nazism but I hated McCarthy too. Single-handedly he had introduced an air of fear and suspicion into the American scene the likes of which I had not experienced since the arrival of Hitler in Germany. (The U.S. Senate later condemned Sen. McCarthy.)

Somehow the lovemaking with Vi did help me to alleviate the terror and the pain instigated by McCarthy, and whenever her good-natured diabetic father - a former New York City cop - happened to be out guarding a bank on weekends we could safely retire to her small bedroom and engage in our lustful activity without fear of being interrupted. And yet - - what had an even more dreadful inhibiting effect on me during those hours of sensual pleasure was the fact that Vi had a lifesize crucifix hanging over the headboard of her bed, with an equally lifesize figure of a tormented and crucified Jesus Christ nailed to the cross, bleeding from his hands, feet and navel, looking down on our sexual activity just a matter of inches above us.

This forbidding divine symbol of love and suffering with its crown of thorns on its sorrowful head plus the soon-to-be expected arrival of Vi's father with his loaded gun, in no time turned me into an utterly nervous, sweating, useless and impotent lover, which obviously neither improved nor blessed our relationship.

We were still in love despite this frustrating sexual problem and actually planned not only our wedding and guest list, which would have drained me financially, but we also started to look for

an apartment near Vi's appropriately named Bliss Stree home. Annemarie,my sister, who at the time was still living with her German girlfriend Ilse Low, enjoyed a good relationship with Vi and was also looking forward to the impending wedding and marriage.

However, the closer we came to the summer date of the actual matrimonial event the more insistent became Vi's demand that I start taking religious instructions at her church and convert to Roman Catholicism. At that juncture I balked. Even though I had not been a regular religious worshipper after leaving my mother in 1939, I certainly did not want to give up my or my parents' religion and enter into a new one,whose strictures and political makeup at that particular point in time did not at all appeal to me, to my religious sensibilities.

When I raised my objections to Viola's demand that I convert, she seemed genuinely surprised that I had not been affected by the Sunday masses and sermons I had attended with her for almost a whole year. In fact, I admitted to her that my resistance to joining her faith at this juncture was probably more prominent now than before our romance started. Moreover, I acknowledged to her that I had neither the wish nor the intention of abandoning my faith now or in the future. Equally, I did not expect her to convert to my religion, either.

Her reaction to what she considered to be sheer stubbornness on my part was, to put it mildly, quite hostile,even vindictive. She claimed that my refusal to convert bordered almost on the ungodly and that she could never marry a man who did not sincerely believe in God. I explained to her that I believed in the Almighty, that billions of Protestants, Jews and Muslims - like Catholics -

were faithful to the Supreme Being, but that I simply did not want to change my religion in order to make our love or marriage dependent only on my accepting her own religious preference as the true one. After all, I explained to her, I did not ask her either to marry me under the socalled shotgun contract of accepting my religion. I also made clear to her that if we were blessed with youngsters, our children should be free to choose their own religion when they reached their teens. Without too much of a surprise to me, she would not accept this suggestion. They had to become Catholics at birth.

What upset her, and to a degree me, even more was my questioning her one evening about her bi-weekly confessional. I asked her point-blank whether she admitted to her priest her "sin" of sleeping with someone not Catholic and, to top it, without the benefit of a priest's matrimonial blessing. She did not, Vi explained to me, because in her opinion God was "All-Seeing" and she could ask for the Supreme Lord's forgiveness for breaking the vow of chastity of an unmarried woman in her own prayers at home and consequently she could thus circumvent the involvement of a man of the cloth - her priest - with such an embarrassing confession, especially since the priest knew both her and her family socially.

When my curiosity caused me to question her further about this selective confessional and I asked her why she even bothered to go to confession when she knew damn well that, to quote her, God "the All-Seeing" was witnessing all her sins and trespasses anyway, I had her morally or spiritually cornered (without meaning to) and she became quite upset, terribly emotional, raising her voice to a high-decible pitch, which I had never been accustomed to from her, accusing me of trying to destroy her faith in God. I assured her that this was not my intention, that I just wanted an answer to my question of why she was so selective about confessing certain

items and not others. Vi started to cry and my heart melted in a second, because it was the furthest from my mind to shake her faith in God or the tenets of her religion, and the night turned out to be a total washout as far as lovemaking was concerned. She retired to her sister's bedroom and I spent a restless night on the sofa in the livingroom.

Nevertheless, Vi became ever more adamant that I convert to her Catholic faith the longer our relationship lasted; in fact, my conversion to her faith became finally the rock on which our love foundered. And at last/long she came out with it: if I refused to join her religious denomination she wanted to terminate our relationship. In turn, I objected to this dictatorial either-or proposition of hers and felt that it probably was not only my own religion to which she objected but equally/to our unsatisfactory sexual relationship that had caused the "matrimonial" rift.

Since this terminal exchange took place in her home, ... I saw no other way out but to pack my pajamas and shaving kit and set out to kiss her good-bye. She drew back wordlessly and I could do nothing but to nod my farewell to her. There was nothing stiff-upperlippish about this; I had steeled myself inwardly for well over a week that this relationship would better be terminated and I felt even relieved that I could leave her home without an outburst of anger on her part or a quarrelsome goodbye.

On my lone/midnight walk to the elevated Number Seven subway station at Bliss Street, fate would decide that I meet her sister Ginny. I stopped to say "hello" and acquaint her with the sad news of our parting, but to my surprise Ginny totally ignored me and simply walked past me on the deserted street as if I didn't exist at all./ Somehow this proved to me that Viola and Ginny must have discussed my rejection as a future husband for quite some time already and

that I must have been regarded by the two sisters as a has-been suitor, ready to be discarded, like some wrong chemical formula to be wiped off the blackboard.

Perhaps I should have had the courage and the brains to realize Vi was bound to terminate our relationship already quite a few months earlier, because at that time a rather embarrassing incident had taken place when we were celebrating our engagement, with my inviting her to a sumptuous dinner at the New York "Copacabana" nightclub.

Somehow Vi used this opportunity after our meal to impress upon me again that now was the time for me to take religious instructions and convert to Roman Catholicism. When I refused to comply with her demand, a quarrel ensued that soured our entire evening and, even worse, it brought tears to her eyes while we were listening to the star attraction of the evening, Vi's favorite singer at the time, Johnny Ray. A picture of our date taken by the nightclub photographer is still in my photo album half a century later.

But then, at long last, the inevitable break did occur rather undramatically.

Nevertheless, the event that truly, and astonishingly, pulled me out of my romantic doldrums a short while later, turned out to be, of all things, a Roman Catholic wake, when the father of one of our co-workers, Artie Luhman, had died. Never will I forget, or not be amazed, by this occasion when we sat in the funeral parlor near the open flower-garlanded coffin, in which Artie's father reposed with rosy cheeks, and the friends and relatives of the deceased started telling jokes, with the inevitable result that the "mourners" soon started to howl with laughter and neighboring mourners sent over delegations, tearfully begging us to pipe down.

altogether
But that year and the following one appeared to me to be a time of final farewells of long-ago friends and acquaintances.

First of all, the man who was mainly financially responsible for me in England, Sir Eustace Pulbrook, the chairman of Lloyds of London, had died, as I learned from an obituary in the New York Times. And then my friends, the Bruhns in Hamburg, wrote to me that some people I knew from my youth in that Hanseatic city had also passed away: Adolf Secker, a rabid Nazi, who often discussed classical music with me and conducted the Hamburg radio orchestra in the 1930s, and the father of Erika Kempp (or was it Kamp?), the bar-owner on Hamburg's Braamkamp, who evidently had been killed as late as 1953 collecting coal while illegally crossing an above-ground subway (Hochbahn) railroad line.

But the death I mourned most of all that year was the news of Mrs. Atkinson's passing, she being the woman who had first sheltered me in February 1939 on my arrival in Dorset, England at the agricultural place, where the three monkeys had warmed me on a bitterly cold blustery afternoon in their outdoor cage.

Of course, in retrospect, all this seemed lightyears away from my sundered relationship with Viola Campbell, but I suppose in each epoch of our lives we hurt differently, and that romantic breakup oddly enough had not turned out to be as weepy a main feature in my program of unplanned romances as I had feared it might.

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Somehow this separation simply did not break my heart as others had done before and since, because I had already subconsciously adjusted to the fact that I actually did not appreciate getting "hitched" to somebody who was willing to pay greater heed to the religious beliefs of her mate than to his character. In fact, on my way home from Vi I offered a prayer of thanks to God that this romance had been shattered ultimately by two persons' faith in Him.

A week after our breakup Vi left the job where we had met and worked together and I felt doubly relieved that this proved to be as clean and wholesome a break as could be imagined.

Only once more did I meet her: in front of the Forty-Second Street Public Library on Fifth Avenue right between the two majestic stone lions. By this time, about half a dozen years after our misbegotten romance, I was living already in Jackson Heights with my wife Myrtil. Vi reported to me that she was also married. To my way of thinking she appeared to have lost quite a bit of weight and somehow the lustre had seeped out of her face even though she had had an operation to remove a slight hook from her nose.

We exchanged a few noncommittal words about our new families and I learned nothing but the fact that she was very happy with her husband; after that I never heard from her again, not that I expected a call from her when I mentioned that I had my number listed in the Queens telephone directory.

In retrospect, the hardest part of our relationship happened oddly enough in Vineyard Haven on Martha's Vineyard, where at an earlier stage of our relationship I had rented a bridal suite for us in a local hotel.

To my everlasting disgrace and shame, I had unaccountably never cancelled

the reservation for this honeymoon suite and arrived alone that summer to the shock and puzzlement of the hotel receptionist. He had never experienced anything like this before, and there, in the wedding suite, I spent the loneliest vacation of my life for a whole week, mourning the loss of my bride and bedfellow Viola.

To make matters worse, there was hardly anybody but me in the hotel or on the beach at that time and for some reason even the waitress seemed to resent my presence, displaying a disdainful attitude when serving me: a bridegroom without a bride!

And if that wasn't enough to sour my "honeymoon," another shock awaited me one afternoon while I was taking a boattrip to the neighboring island of Nantucket. (That episode is described in full on page 332 in the chapter headed "Ella.")

Still,there was one additional shock to come in relation to my romance with Vi; it actually slapped me in the face years later when I went to Tiffany's and the Empire Diamond Service in New York to get an appraisal on the diamond ring that, a decade earlier, I had bought her on the occasion of our engagement.

At that time I was, of course, head over heels in love with her and gladly parted with some of my life's savings to quench her thirst for a diamond ring. It just so happened she had a friend who, I was told by her,worked in the diamond trade,and one night he came over to her house with an assortment of diamonds in various price ranges,and within minutes Vi picked a ring she had fallen in love with. I was informed by her friend that this ring would cost me at least two grand in a reputable jewelry store like Cartier's or Tiffany's, but since he had been a lifelong friend of Vi's family, he claimed he was willing to part with it for a mere five hundred dollars.(It should be remembered that by today's monetary standards, all of this would amount to three to four times the sales price of half a century ago.)

Being an absolute greenhorn in the jewelry trade and knowing that he was a friend of the Campbells, I trusted him implicitly ard at last dished out a large part of my life's savings, giving him the full amount in cash, which he preferred to a check.

It did show something of Vi's fine character that she returned the ring to me without my asking for it when we broke up,but somehow

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I did not feel like parting with it because I was still emotionally attached to my former betrothed. Finally,however,years later, I did pay a visit to Tiffany's and the Empire Diamond Service to have the ring's value appraised,and both of them informed me independently at that time that the ring was so flawed it should never have been sold to me for more than $150.- Or, to rub it in, $350 less than I had paid for it. A week later I returned to the Empire Diamond Service and sold it to them for that amount, but then wrote a letter to my former fiancée at Bliss Street that she should not trust her socalled friend since the engagement ring had not been worth more than $150.- My letter was not returned to me by the post office as "Addressee Unknown," but by the same token I never heard from her either.

Ruth (1955)

A truly great love of mine in every sense of the word was a most attractive, highly intelligent woman a year or so older than me by the name of Ruth Fredericks.

When I first lived in permanent "digs" in Manhattan with the elderly Austrian couple, Marianne and Hans Klemperer (who claimed to be related to the world-famous German conductor Otto Klemperer and his son, the actor Werner Klemperer, (Col.Klink of "Hogan's Heroes") and their own son George, the apartment opposite the Klemperers at 611 West 111 Street was occupied by a darling elderly lady,Mrs.Fredericks. Since the Klemperers and Mrs.Fredericks,a widow in her sixties,were friends, I often joined in their conversation and became quite pally with Mrs.Fredericks,too. Even so, it took me a good year or so to learn that she also had a daughter,Ruth,who visited her once a week and was

an exceptionally appealing,dark-eyed,bright woman in her early thirties in 1951 or 1952.

About a year later, Ruth moved to Paris,where she made a living,for the most part,as an Anglo-French secretary,but about eighteen months after her departure she returned from France.One of the reasons for this was that evidently a romance there with a guy named Jean had not turned out as she had hoped and she also still suffered from the tiresome after-effects of a bout with jaundice.Over the next year or two our own relationship became warmer,even quite steamy,and we discovered that we enjoyed not only our close friendship,but that our professional aims seemed to have something in common: both of us wanted to become successful authors.

Often we met during lunchtime at an automat near the Record Hunter on Fifth Avenue and 42nd Street or at the Horn & Hardart on Sixth Avenue and Bryant Park,enjoying their franks and beans or their macaroni and cheese,each for 45¢.Over the following year,we began to construct the plot of a three-act play, "Season of Longing",that we considered good enough to sell to a theatrical producer. But since it proved impossible to find the privacy to hammer out the dialogue for such a play in my "digs" or at her mother's apartment across the hallway,Ruth invited me on Saturday afternoons to her Manhattan apartment at 448 East 88th Street,and it was here,over a period of another year,that we made good headway with our dramatic comedy.

Ruth wrote it out in longhand while we worked on the dialogue, and I typed it out a day or two later in my room at the Klemperers, the first version of it on my portable Smith-Corona Sterling typewriter,which I had bought around 1950 for less than fifty dollars and on which I still type my letters and manuscripts over half a century later.

But people being young and living alone,soon let their hearts speak to one another as well as their minds,and the not unexpected began to take shape.The relationship became increasingly heated, and

when I introduced Ruth one afternoon to my sister Annemarie, who was then living near Riverside Drive on 88th Street, the latter felt so strongly about Ruth's beauty, character and intelligence that she encouraged me strongly to nurture this romantic relationship.

As usual, the inevitable happened: on Saturday afternoons Ruth and I worked on our play; in the evenings I treated her to dinner at one of the local restaurants to a good meal of what was referred to as a "blue plate," and our weekend nights proved to be the most romantically satisfying encounters of my life.

In retrospect,there is little doubt in my mind that I was truly enamored of Ruth by her beauty, her intelligence, her character, her refined art of lovemaking, although the three-act play both of us were working on still required some polishing in a second rewrite; also the wit in it was too subdued to fully engage an audience. But Ruth has always occupied a special place in my heart, not only for our romantic interlude, but because she was a person of character, decency and engaging intelligence. To have had her as a wife would have saved me a great deal of future heartache.

Then something happened that dealt our relationship a fatal blow. Maybe it turned out to be my spirit of adventure or just a subconscious attempt on my part to try something outrageous,something original and dramatic for no other reason than to break free of the common-day kind of humdrum existence to which I had become accustomed in New York. I simply started to look for a female penpal in Europe without having a matrimonial thought in my mind, by placing a tiny ad in a German magazine - Konstanze - that listed hundreds of penpal ads for people looking for companioship or romance, even for matrimony;nothing terribly unusual.

I had nothing to lose but a few dollars for this innocuous ad,

thinking I'd get,maybe,two or three replies from girls wanting to correspond with a relatively young German-American.

To my amazement (and shock) I was totally overwhelmed by the response when the German magazine sent me the young ladies' mail: within the next six to eight weeks, I must have received between two and three hundred letters from some of the most beautiful German, Austrian and Italian girls imaginable. All of them included photos of themselves, some of them in daring bikinis; I was confounded by so many replies but had to answer all of them that my ad was not so much influenced by a wish for matrimony as by simply engaging in an exchange of ideas,thoughts,lifestyles and episodes of our lives.

It must be kept in mind that at the time, just a decade after the end of World War II, the cream of the male German and Austrian population had vanished in the graves dug by Hitler, and for any young German woman hopeful at finding a husband in that immediate postwar era was not a matter of ease and nitpicking, but then to suddenly see an ad from an American citizen in his early thirties became an invitation not to be lightly dismissed. The responses came from quite lovely intelligent girls, judging by the photos and letters I received from them in 1954, and although I tried to concentrate only on one or two of these female penpals (and I hope that all of them are now happily married with grandchildren of their own), the final "winner" turned out to be a charming woman ten years my junior - about 22 years old - from the northern-Italy town of Como, right on the Swiss border. Her mother, I learned, was born in Hamburg,Germany, just like mine, and her father turned out to be a Swiss and the owner of a tarpaper factory near Lago di Como, one of Europe's most breathtakingly lovely lakeside resorts.

And here, at via Bellinzona, I got to know my future wife Myrtil

after her mother had invited me to stay with the family in the summer of 1956 in their beautiful villa overlooking Lago di Como, which furthermore was in easy walking distance of the Swiss-Italian border town Chiasso.

When I brought up this attempt at finding a female penpal and the invitation of one of those girls' mothers to Northern Italy, she did not regard this sudden departure of mine (and possible disloyalty) with unalloyed joy after months of our literary collaboration and even closer romantic encounter. With good reason, she reacted to all of this with deep hurt and anger, which much later revealed to me my own character's weakness, my blindness to the feelings of others, and after a few more frigid meetings, during which we attempted to complete our play, we parted ways, and to my eternal regret rarely met again.

And yet, about forty-five years later, in the twenty-first century, three decades after the divorce from my second wife, I received a package from Ruth and to my astonishment found a copy of a book in it that she had purchased in a public-library-discount-price sale: an English translation of the 20th century German juvenile classic "Emil and the Detectives" by Erich Kästner. The reason: About half-a-century after I had mentioned in passing to Ruth one day that I had played a minor role as an extra in the German 1931 movie of that title, she remembered my remark and sent the book to me with a few noncommittal words on a small post-it note.

I answered immediately, thanking her for her thoughtfulness and alertness in associating me with this title about fifty years after I had talked to her about it; at the same time I took the opportunity to enlighten her about my life since we had come to a parting, but our encounters since then have been far and few between.

Earlier still, around 1948, or 1949, when I was living "in digs" with

the Klemperers on Manhattan's 111th Street overlooking the Hudson, one of the boarders there turned out to be a young female student, whose ambition it was to become a ballerina, or at least to join a reputable corps de ballet, even the ballet company at Radio City Music Hall.

Ella (1949)

Her name was Ella Graham Massie, a dreamily attractive and highly intelligent girl in her early twenties with the figure of a Goldwyn girl and two ever-lively smiling dark-brown eyes and Garbo-esque cheekbones. We had rooms next to each other and frequently shared dinner at Mrs.Klemperer around seven at night. Over a number of months, especially when the Klemperers spent their summers at Fleischmanns in the cooler Catskills,Ella would invite her ballet-school co-students to the Klemperer apartment and the large airy diningroom was invariably turned into a ballet classroom, where her guests (balletomaniacs I called them) would practice the most inane and intricate steps and movements till three and four in the mornings before dropping exhausted to the floor and sleeping it off innocently - especially on Sundays - until around nine or ten a few hours later, and after a brief breakfast at Bickford's on Broadway and 112th Street continue with their dance routines till dinner time.

Even though I could find little of interest in the field of dance, with ballet not being my favorite kind of artistic self-expression, I did my duty and visited a number of ballet performances with Ella, especially those of Balanchine's newly formed New York City Ballet company and the visiting Sadler's Wells Ballet from London,starring Margot Fonteyn, Moira Shearer (from whom I received a sweet letter after

writing her how much I had enjoyed her performance in the movie "The Red Shoes"),Robert Helpman and, later, with Rudolf Nureyev in the renamed Royal Ballet company.

For the sake of love I attended these performances, or watched her practice with a class headed by a Russian ballet teacher, a wrinkled but proudly erect woman in her eighties, who claimed to have danced in Russia with Nijinsky and her mentor Diaghilev.

Ella and I usually spent Sundays together in the country and even over half a century later I still cherish a black-and-white picture I took of her when we went rowing on/and swimming in Connecticut's beautiful Candlewood Lake.

Throughout our relationship she would let me kiss and fondle her breasts but never allowed me to seduce her all the way.Oddly enough,this sexual abstinence served as an aphrodisiac for me and I regretted it no end when Ella finally moved to another lodging near Broadway around 50th Street to be closer to her ballet school. Here I visited her mostly on weekends on the tenth floor and distinctly remember many of these visits in late 1953.

One day, the elevator there had broken down and I had to walk up the ten flights of stairs. But what set this occasion apart from the dull exhaustive work involved in climbing these steep marble steps was the fact that I became aware of the voices and footsteps of a man and a woman traipsing down the same narrow staircase. Finally I came face to face with them: they were African-Americans. However, what made this occasion something to be remembered for the rest of my life was the fact that this handsome young couple turned out to be none other than Sidney Poitier and Diahann Carroll, who were probably the only two black performers at the time eminently successful all over the U.S. and probably the world. I had to press against the wall of the narrow

circular staircase to let them pass, and since there was no balustrade to hold on to, the lovely Ms.Carroll instinctively reached out to grasp one of my arms to pass me without falling. Both actors were dressed immaculately, and Ms. Carroll flashed me a most grateful little smile and squeezed my arm, whether in gratitude for letting them pass or to prevent her from falling downstairs on that narrow stairway I'll never know. I also became aware of the faintest most alluring perfume she was wearing while the incredibly handsome Mr.Poitier nodded most graciously in my direction. For a moment I was tongue-tied by this totally unexpected encounter and only when they had descended a few steps past me did I summon enough courage to call after them, "Mr. Poitier, I admire both of you...as actors and human beings."

They stopped, seemingly surprised by this spontaneous outburst, (I was in my twenties) and Sidney Poitier simply said: "Thank you,sir," before both of them continued on their laborious way down.

I mentioned this brief encounter to Ella, who claimed that she had shared a few days earlier a ride down on the then-working elevator with both of the performers.

Early in 1950, Ella's mother came to visit her daughter in New York and the three of us went to see a modern opera on Broadway, Gian Carlo Menotti's "The Consul," which left a deep impression on me for its tragic story content, with which I could readily identify as a refugee from political oppression, and for its musical quality, which to this date still is considered by me the finest opera written in the second half of the twentieth century.

In fact, I was so taken by it that I wrote a letter of appreciation to its gloriously voiced star Vera Bryner and the composer. To my surprise I received a most gracious letter from both of them,

in March and April respectively, thanking me for my words of encouragement as well as Mr. Menotti's announcement that he was planning to open soon with "The Consul" in London. Certainly Mr. Menotti's music has always sounded more melodical than other modern classical compositions, which to my ears appeared as hieroglyphical as ultra-modern poetry, and I often wonder how "popular" this music will be and worthy of performances a century from now.

Nevertheless, I tried my best to land Ella in a reputable ballet company and in September 1950 wrote a letter to Margot Fonteyn, who not only served as the prima ballerina at London's Royal Ballet and was performing in New York at the time, but she was indisputably one of the greatest ballet dancers of the twentieth century. She wrote me a most charming apologetic letter on September 30, 1950 from New York's Plaza Hotel that she "was hoping to find an opportunity to see Miss Massie , which I should very much have liked to have done, but unfortunately between the amount of work I have been doing and the fact that our rehearsals are held at all sorts of hours of the day with very little warning, I never managed to find free time or to know sufficiently in advance when I should have any free time. Please forgive me. I am really sorry if I have disappointed you or Miss Massie."

And just two weeks later, on October 15 (my sister's birthday), I received a letter from the St.Moritz on Central Park, this time from the other star at that London company, Moira Shearer, who also happened to have been the star of the film "The Red Shoes." She wrote: "...Could Miss Massie come around to the Metropolitan on Thursday the 20th about 8 p.m. just before the show? I hope it will not be too late in the day for her, but our various rehearsal calls are so haphazard that this is really the only safe hour to make an appointment. - Of course, I shall give your love to England,

though we aren't going to see her for quite a while longer I'm afraid."

Ella did keep the appointment with Moira Shearer, but evidently it proved to be quite a washout. The meeting took place just minutes prior to Ms. Shearer's appearance on stage and the ballerina turned out to be so nervous and preoccupied with the impending stage performance that Ella felt she was more in the way than the fellow-ballet dancer that she hoped she would be recognized as, and in the end she could report very little to me of what had actually transpired in the dressing-room in the few minutes she saw Ms. Shearer. Evidently, the ballerina's letter to me, according to Ella, turned out to be more warmhearted than the meeting between the two women, and that hurt Ella.

Our romance also began to fizzle in early 1953. In fact, once while Ella had to go upstate for a couple of weeks, one of my letters to her was misconstrued by her as me having an affair with somebody, which certainly was not the case since I did not even have any interest in another female while being in love with Ella, but according to her the damage was done and she wanted out of our relationship. There was nothing I could do to persuade her to reconsider and we simply broke up when I realized she had made up her mind to devote all her time now to the pursuit of ballet.

Only once did I meet her again. The odd thing is that that episode seemed to have been written by a hack, a cheap, sadistic scriptwriter out for a buck in a B movie. Actually, it happened quite some time later (in 1954), after my Roman Catholic fiancée Viola

Campbell and I had broken irreconcilable our relationship because of our religious differences and I was spending my solitary two-week summer vacation on Martha's Vineyard, where we had booked and planned our honeymoon.

On one of those lonely summer days I decided to take the steamer to the neighboring island of Nantucket for a whole day to take a look at that famous summer resort. I do recall Bette Davis's summer cottage there as well as Helen Hayes's, but unfortunately these show-business legends were nowhere in sight, although they were rumored to be on the island at that particular time. Around lunchtime, though, I felt quite hungry, standing in front of a pseudo-English fish-and-chips shop on Nantucket's Main Street and reading the menu pasted in the window. The prices appeared a bit steep and I checked my change to make sure I had enough left over to make my return trip to Martha's Vineyard.

Stupidly, part of my change had somehow been entangled in my large cotton handkerchief and as I pulled it out, some of the coins dropped on the ground outside the store. As I bent down to recover my change, I heard a female voice asking: "Is that you, Paul?"

I looked up and to my total astonishment and shock saw my old flame Ella Graham Massie standing right in front of me in a flower-embroidered dress, looking devastatingly gorgeous. I got up, rather shakily, leaving half of the coins on the cobblestones, then grabbed her hand, asking her what she was doing on Nantucket. With a big grin, she pointed to a smallish man with large eyes next to her and announced that she was here on her honeymoon.

This announcement came like a bull's hoof kicking my testicles. It literally took my breath away. She asked me what I was doing here and I mumbled the truth, that my fiancée and I had broken up because of religious differences and that I was spending the

"honeymoon" on the island all by myself. I am sure Ella meant well when she invited me to spend an afternoon with her and her new husband, Peter. She gave me the address and phone number of the hotel where they were staying on Nantucket and hoped I'd call them and set a date for our encounter. I promised I would call and bade them a hasty farewell and a happy marriage, claiming that I had to catch the ferry back to Martha's Vineyard.

Stunned, shattered and triply depressed, I returned to my hotel, where I packed and returned the following day to the mainland, making my way back immediately to New York and Annemarie. I simply could not go through with meeting this happily married couple, not only because my own marital union never came to pass but because the girl I had just met again happened to be one of my great loves years earlier, and now she lay in the arms of another.

As fate would have it, I did meet Ella and her husband one more time, but this time, thank the Lord, they were not even aware of my presence.

It happened about a year after the Nantucket encounter that I went to the movies at the Guild Theater in the back of the Radio City Music Hall. At that time, the tiny theater was presenting newsreels and documentaries from all over the world almost around the clock, and probably out of sheer boredom I went to see the 90-minute show for a buck-and-a-half (this was years before the U.S. newsreel cinemas closed for good due to the arrival of regular TV newscasts at home). Halfway through that performance I became aware of a couple sitting down directly in front of me and to my shock I realized that it was Ella again with her husband. I certainly did not want to be recognized by them since we were only

a matter of half a yard apart. I cursed fate bumping again into this deliriously happy couple while I was still nursing my loneliness in newsreel theaters, and so I got up, having seen only half the show, but I did consider it wiser to beat a hasty and cowardly retreat under those circumstances.

As much as I once loved this charming Southern girl, I am doubly glad that I was never given another opportunity to have my heart broken by her presence, especially when that presence was in the company of the man she loved. Still, I sometimes wonder whatever has happened to her and all the other darling loves of my life.

Only about one former love I am being kept up-to-date, namely When my son informs me that his mother, my second wife - Ursula - is doing very well with her third husband in Florida, although she still does suffer from quite debilitating backaches (and often walks with a cane. My relationship with her is described in two 1964 chapters. By the same token, one additional episode involving Ella and me, and deserving its own chapter, is depicted under the heading "Fighting with Jack Dempsey." 1952.

DEAR SATCHMO. (1970)

An un-Noel-Coward-like brief encounter has engraved itself forever in my mind and heart for well over thirty years on the occasion I came face to face with an African-American, beloved the world over, while walking down Thirty-Fifth Avenue, just a few minutes distance from my home in Jackson Heights.

It happened to be a Sunday morning and there was no mistaking it.The man who slowly seemed to take his constitutional in a checkered suit on the almost deserted street was none other than the immortal Louis "Satchmo" Armstrong. It would have been difficult not to recognize such a world-class figure, especially when the two of us were passing each other on the otherwise deserted street. Immediately and impulsively I swung around and called after him: "Good morning, Mr. Armstrong." Not surprisingly, he turned around as well and offered me his world-famous graciously toothy and only slightly familiar smile, saying in a not so gravelly voice: "And a good morning to you, sir."

Even though he did not hold his world-famous white handkerchief in his hands (nor his trumpet, for that matter), some incredible admiration for him literally propelled me to want to shake his hand and tell him how much I admired him, although jazz only took second place in my life to classical music. But he had already turned away and resumed his walk. I figured it would have been absolute madness not to grab the opportunity by the horn without declaring my admiration for him. And so I simply called out his name, which caused him to turn around for the second time. I approached him and let him know that I really was a fan of classical music, but that he was the only person who had opened my ears to American jazz and I wanted to express my gratitude to him in that respect as well as for the ingratiating personality

he had always portrayed in his films and TV shows.

His hand was cold, but his grasp proved to be firm and hearty. Even though this was late in summer, shortly after his seventieth birthday, which the world had celebrated on TV and radio, his truly humble behavior on shaking my hand and his modest way of expressing his gratitude for my heartfelt congratulations, truly appeared to show a character of noble grandeur, although in his professional career he had been cheered endlessly by millions of fans the world over for more than forty years.

He did appear to me to look tired and spent and at seventy it was not surprising that his full instrumental effectiveness lately had not been as proficient as it was in his heyday. The trumpet is a most demanding instrument and God seems to have decided that a septuagenarian would not be able to use his lung-power as efficiently as Satchmo did when he was in his forties. But his "When the Saints Go Marchin' In" will hum along in my un-jazzy brain as long as Handel's "Hallelujah" chorus.

Somebody told me years later that he and his wife actually had a home nearby in Corona, in easy walking distance from where our paths had crossed and I had lived since 1957.

Less than a year after that brief encounter, two days after his seventy-first birthday on Independence Day in 1971, the great Satchmo passed away.

MY FAVORITE WOMAN LIBBER. (1970)

Probably the most widely-known person I have ever worked with professionally in the same office was, at the time, still totally unknown. That happened in the late 1960s or around 1970 when this young woman joined the publishing firm I was employed by - Sterling Publishing Company - although she stayed with this publisher for less than a year before moving on to greener pastures and later devoted her young life to writing. Her name is Rita Mae Brown and she became the author not only of her semi-autobiographical bestseller "Rubyfruit Jungle" but probably the leading spokesperson of the U.S. Lesbian movement at the time, although she did mention to me that at one time she did have sexual relations with the opposite sex.

She made no bones about her sexuality at Sterling, and New Yorkers being the sophisticated liberal crowd they are, the Sterling employees reacted with merely a shrug to the announcement of her sexual preference.

I liked Rita tremendously, not only for the spunky bravado declaration of her sexuality in the late 1960s, which did require some courage in those days, but also for her intelligence and beauty, her undenaible femininity and those lovely,dark,expressive eyes.

In all fairness one must also point out that she was by nature a bit of a rebel long before her name had become an American household word, probably in order to needle some of the more conservative types she had to associate and contend with.

For example, I distinctly remember her arriving one morning for work at our office on Park Avenue South, dressed in a white naval jacket whose bottom rim just about covered the upper part of her mightily attractive,well-shaped thighs, a sight that tended to

appeal sensually to any right-thinking young male and Lesbian type but at the same time could not be considered quite the attire for a 9 - 5 officejob by any stretch of the imagination and was most likely intended to needle the more straitlaced senses of the bosses. Moreover, she also wore a pair of black undies, although the more fertile-minded young men at the office maintained that the blackness visible between her legs when she sat down and the white naval jacket hitched up an inch or two could easily be mistaken for her pubic hair.Or as some office wit coined it:her public hair.

David A. Boehm, the boss and founder of Sterling and publisher of the American hardcover version of the "Guinness Book of World Records" finally called her into his office and demanded that,in the future, she should wear a more conservative outfit since her current dress was not something that would normally be considered acceptable by U.S. employers and on top of it cause too much office gossip and diversion from the work for which the employees were being paid their salary.

Somehow, as a man not involved in prescribing the correct dress-code in offices, I was greatly impressed by Rita's bravado performance but could also understand Mr. Boehm's objections.

Later she mentioned this incident in "Rubyfruit Jungle" as well as another event that was also aimed at Mr.Boehm,whom she particularly disliked, probably because he represented, in her eyes at least, an authoritative father figure against whom she rebelled and simply refused to acknowledge as the independent spirit she was. Evidently, she had scooped up some dog-do in a newspaper on the street and emptied a generous portion of those turds in a female employee's desk drawer. Somehow it developed that the boss immediately suspected Rita as the culprit and dismissed her.

Rita displayed a particular dislike for this other attractive

female employee, Rhea Rollin, with whom I happened to have had a brief romantic fling at the time. Rhea was an intelligent girl in her twenties, an active member of a choral society, an accomplished pianist,and related to the TV reporter Betty Rollin.

Unfortunately,though, Rhea began to display disturbing signs of psychological stress, suffering from depression,which she tried to alleviate by constantly visiting her "shrink," who did not seem to be able to help her at all, and when this unfortunate young pretty lady was admitted in the 1970s to St.Vincent's Hospital, then to another mental recuperation center, I visited her two or three more times several months later and could hardly recognize her. The once so appealing petite figure had ballooned into a round colossus, which was furthermore aggravated by her pleading with me to bring her heaps of candies, milk chocolate bars, and cartons of Chesterfields. When I still worked with her at Sterling a couple of years earlier, she had never smoked or consumed any kind of sweets.

About a month later I visited her for the last time and a staff member informed me Rhea had been transferred to another hospital, and that, if I dropped her a note, it would be forwarded to her and she could answer me at her own leisure. This I did; however, I never heard from her again.

Rita Mae Brown, on the other hand, was still in her late twenties at the time, just about when she described those and other semi-autobiographical experiences at Sterling and other places in her 1973 "Rubyfruit Jungle." Her manuscript was rejected by most major publishers until a feminist small-press in Vermont, "Daughters,Inc." accepted her opus and Bantam turned it into a major paperback bestseller in 1977.

Many of the Sterling employees, including the boss, David A. Boehm, and Rhea are mentioned under pseudonyms in Rita's book; some readers feel I had also been brought to life in the work, but personally I could not find myself in any of its personae dramatis. Neither Mr. Boehm nor Rhea were terribly amused by the satirical brush strokes with which Rita had dramatized them.

In my opinion, it is greatly due to Rita's singularly bright and appealing appearances on TV and her other bestsellers that women today are enjoying much more equality with men in the U.S. than they would have achieved without her. Of course, this acknowledgment is in no way meant to deflect from the worthy work and aspirations of such other women libbers as Betty Friedan, Germaine Greer, Gloria Steinem and the rest of them.

There is, however, one sad postscript to this Sterling experience: In the late spring of 2001, I called Rhea's distant relative, the very capable NBC-TV correspondent Betty Rollin, to find out from her whatever had happened to Rhea, and I was informed by her that Rhea had committed suicide in the late 1980s, but that Betty did not know any further details since she and Rhea had never been close.

Nevertheless, quite apart from this tragic turn of events, Rita Mae Brown's free and witty spirit, armed with a highly intellectual and combustible literary power, succeeded in marching on to fame and fortune.

A SUCCESSFUL AND UNSUCCESSFUL PHOTO SAFARI.(1972)

After my wife Ursula and I separated in 1969, she moved with our five-year-old son Stephen from New York to Silver Spring,Maryland, where she had been offered a job as a bi-lingual secretary with her New York employer Carl Zeiss, the German-American optical company. Both of us looked for a place for her to stay and finally found a pleasant, reasonably priced apartment on the outskirts of Silver Spring, not far from her employer.

Once she and Stephen had settled there, I made it my business to visit Stephen for a weekend per month by plane, train or bus.

On those occasions, Stephen and I always stayed at the Silver Spring Holiday Inn, not too far from the New York bus stop, and during the day we visited museums, theaters or movies, then dined out and retired for the night.

By the time Stephen had turned ten in 1974, the situation was reversed and he came to visit me in Queens since there is a much larger selection of museums, theaters and cinemas in NewYork than there is in Silver Spring and nearby Washington, D.C.

But in the early 1970s, when I still visited him by train, a rather unpleasant event occurred to me on the way back home from the nation's capital. About halfway to New York's Grand Central Terminal, I felt the need to go to the bathroom. Two of the bathrooms in my and the adjoining coaches were occupied, so I went through the third car and found a large crowd of people gathered around a seated passenger, who I could not see from the car's entrance, clamoring for his autograph. Nature called, however, and I wormed my way anxiously through the mob,finally finding relief in the car's lavatory. On the way back to my coach I could linger a bit longer around that mob scene and at long last

discovered that the center of attraction was none other than Muhammad Ali, the boxing heavy-weight champion of the world. He was paying no attention to the multitude around him but, instead, kept entertaining a large group of children with his card tricks. After I did succeed in pushing my way through the crowd, I asked him whether he would give me permission to take a couple of pictures of him with my camera. He hardly looked up, but said that it was okay with him, yet that I should focus the camera more on the children than on him. I promised I'd do that and returned to my car to get my camera that I had packed in the overnight bag I always took along with me for my weekend stay in Washington.

When I tried to return to his car, a member of Ali's staff, a burly African-American giant of a bodyguard, refused to let me enter the railroad car. I explained to him that the champ himself had just given me permission to shoot a couple of pictures of him, but the guard remained adamant about it and declined to let me enter the car. I got a bit upset and explained that the railroad carriage was public property, unless the champ had paid for the entire car, and he had no right to prohibit a passenger from using a passenger car. His persistent refusal and my rightful request to let me pass became more and more vociferous until an angry shouting match ensued between him and me, which finally reached the ears of the champ himself, who was seated only a few rows from the uproar. Finally he got up to approach us and enquired what the argument was about. I explained to him that he had given me permission a few minutes earlier to take a couple of pictures of him, but that his staff member would not let me pass into his car. Ali immediately took me by the elbow and informed me once more that I could take just two photos of him and the kids he was entertaining with his card tricks; and that's ex-

actly what I did after he had settled down again showing off his wizardry to the youngsters,who squealed with delight and amazement at his conjuring tricks. I thanked him profusely for his courtesy in letting me take these two photos,shaking his hand, and on my way back to my car passed the bodyguard who had blocked my way initially and this man was gracious enough to apologize with a simple "Sorry, sir."

However, at Grand Central I sprinted out of the railroad car and positioned myself at the end of the underground platform, being able to take another photo of the boxing champion, with his entourage on their way out of the station. These pictures are in one of my photo albums and I considered myself much luckier that time than on the occasion when I tried to take a picture of probably the world's most famous female movie star of the twentieth century, Greta Garbo, and of her white-haired gentleman friend in the early 1950s in New York's Central Park.

For some reason, I had my Agfa box camera with me and,after sighting Ms.Garbo, tried to hide behind a tree, but when she was close enough and I stepped out into the open trying to find her in the viewer of my old-fashioned camera, she covered her face immediately behind both her arms and rushed by me,followed sheepishly by her white-maned gentleman friend, who snapped something at me in a language I took to be Swedish. Half a century later,I still regret having failed in my attempt to land the world's most famous and truly elusive female movie star in my photo album.

Some of my pictures probably came out well enough to go public in an amateur photographic exhibition; I know only too well,however, that none of us shutterbugs can ever truly touch such camera giants as Henri Cartier-Bresson,Ansel Adams,Edward Steichen,Karsh,Alfred Eisenstadt,Edward Weston,Paul Strand and Alfred Stieglitz,who in my

opirion had taken the most beautiful black-and-white photograph I have ever seen: the 1894 rainy autumn picture of the Paris intersection of Boulevard des Italiens and rue Scribe, which he titled: "Wet Day on the Boulevard."

MY POOR SON STEPHEN. (1973)

One of the most unexpected and greatest shocks of my life occurred on a Sunday around six in the morning when my son Stephen had come to see me in New York on one of his monthly weekend flights from Washington,D.C., where he lived with his mother.

At the time, in the early 1970s, he was about nine years old; his mother always took him to the Washington airport and I picked him up on the shuttle at LaGuardia an hour later on Saturdays at 11 in the morning. Usually, we spent the weekends going to theaters, museums and movies or we attended some special New York sights, frequently also visiting old friends like Joe and Elsbeth Catalano and especially Roger and Waltraud Walter, who lived in a fabulous house in Armonk near West White Plains and truly loved Stephen. Here they spoiled him with the long nature walks he adored and the grownup company he enjoyed so much since none of them ever talked down to him.

Despite our long-distance separation from each other, Stephen and I have always enjoyed a warm and wonderful father-son relationship and do to this day, now that he is around forty and living in Ft. Lauderdale,Florida. But while he was still visiting me and I took him back to the Shuttle on Sunday evenings, our farewells were never teary-eyed since we knew that we would meet again the following month. Stephen, who made life easy for his parents by being an obedient, lovable and intelligent boy, liked to sleep on my sofa directly under the window sporting the fire-escape. Usually we went to bed around 11 p.m. after the news broadcasts and he rarely woke up before eight in the morning, then filled dozens of pages at my desk, drawing an assortment of animals,trees,people and landscapes with the crayons I had bought for him.

Still exhausted from my daily ten-hour stint during the week at the

office and the nightly grind till two in the morning laboring on my books, I liked to sleep another hour or two until we had a hearty breakfast together in the kitchen at around ten.

But one December Sunday morning - a bitterly cold dark dawn - Stephen woke me well before six o'clock already, claiming that his pillow was wet. I was still quite groggy with sleep and first thought that there was a leak in one of the building's pipes, which had trickled some water on his pillow.

Exhausted, I rose from my bed, turned on the light, and went over to the sofa that I had always covered with laundered white sheets whenever he came to visit me.

Within a mini-second, one of the greatest, heart-stopping shocks of my life clutched at my throat. His white pillow was dark-red, soaking wet with blood, and that blood still came pouring out of his nose and to my absolute horror out of one of his ears. For an instant I panicked. My fingers literally tweaked my chest and I became aware of hot tears trickling down my cheeks. Only the sweet innocent, unperturbed face of my darling son, regarding me quizzically and asking me if I was okay, brought me back to my senses.

I carried him into the bathroom and tried to wash off the blood that still came running out of his nostrils and ear. For about ten minutes I attempted to clean him up when his little boy's head suddenly dropped back all the way. He went limp. He had fainted, plainly from the loss of blood. Although the bleeding - thank heavens! - stopped eventually and I had managed to wash off the worst of it, I was scared to death that his heart might not withstand the enormous loss of blood and stop beating. I dressed him quickly as well as myself, wrapped him in a couple of of the warm blankets that had covered him during the night and carried him through

the bitter-cold semi-dark streets to the Elmhurst General Hospital that is located about ten blocks from where I live.

I tried to hail a cab,of course,but there were precious few of them around at that early hour on a Sunday morning.None of them stopped.

In spite of the intense,biting cold, I managed to carry him, all bundled up, to the hospital within a matter of fifteen minutes. Once in a while I spoke to him, quietly,lovingly - tears of the cold and the tragic circumstance biting my eyes - but there was no response, no reaction to my words. Stephen was still unconscious, his head occasionally lolling back, almost lifelessly.

Once in the hospital, I headed for the emergency room, thinking that at that early hour he would be the only patient. To my surprise and shock, the enormous waiting room was chockful of people; crying infants, bleeding pre-teens, sobbing women,sleeping oldsters, unconscious men in rags, babbling and bloody winos and snarling teenagers,some of them in the company of cops.

I asked the admission clerk whether I could see a doctor immediately. Sure, she said, but I'd have fo fill out a questionnaire first: name,address,age of patient. Next I was told to fill in the nature of my son's ailment. I explained to the nurse I didn't know it,except that he had started to bleed profusely from his right ear and nostrils. The nurse immediately entered a question mark next to the query about the nature of the ailment afflicting Stephen. All that time my unconscious son rested in my arms, breathing deeply, completely out to the world around him. When I had returned the completed admission form to the nurse, I was handed a ticket with a number on it and instructed to wait my turn. I protested about the urgency of the situation, that my son had lost a lot of blood and that it had come gushing out out of his nostrils and ear. I was informed that

every case in the waitingroom was an emergency and no exceptions could be made. Well, I thought, this was not anything like those all/show-biz series about medics on TV at all!

Shivering with cold, tired and despondent, I returned with Stephen to a seat in the back of the jam-packed, noisy/waitingroom, clutching the numbered ticket in one of my hands.

Thank God, the bleeding had stopped/as suddenly - as it had begun and my young son was resting peacefully in my arms, all bundled up in the two blankets. I was miserable and desperate, holding him close to me and kissing his ice-cold and partly/blood-caked cheeks.

It took more than two hours before our number was finally called. By that time, fortunately, Stephen had woken from his fainting spell and complained immediately of being hungry. Not surprisingly, he appeared to be confused at first and completely disoriented. Naturally, he had no idea where he was. I explained to him what had happened, all about the blood having poured out of his nose and right ear, that he had fainted and had to be carried in two blankets to the Elmhurst hospital. All of this struck him not only as weird but funny; he had no recollection of anything that had happened during the night or early morning hours. In fact, now sitting there with me in this huge waiting-room among bleeding drunkards and victims of physical violence and a number of automobile-accident patients, everything appeared to fascinate Stephen, especially with him being part of this army of sadsack faces. Unexpectedly, he suddenly displayed a most cheerful disposition, giggling between his observations which he communicated to me in a conspiratorial whisper while watching the hospital proceedings with great fascination and the keenest interest - - all of this to my intense relief.

At long last, it was our turn to see the doctor. It turned out that this doctor or intern happened to be not only a female but that she came from Lithuania as she explained to us in the course of her examination.

Naturally she went through the basic ritual on checking his heart, lungs and pulse, but Stephen's cheerful, amused disposition brought her to the immediate consclusion that he was in good shape, although he had obviously fainted due to some irregularity of his heartbeat. At the same time she could not quite fathom the cause of his profuse bleeding out of his ear; it may have been due to a middle-ear infection. That he had suffered a nosebleed was not unusual for children his age when they rubbed the nose in their sleep. When I objected that this was not the usual kind of nosebleed but that his entire pillowcase was soaked full of blood and that he indeed had fainted from the loss of blood, I was told not to interfere in the decision-making of the medical staff. I explained that it was not my intention to interfere but just to state a fact. Instead of answering me, she asked Stephen to touch the tip of his nose and then fling his arms out sideways, an exercise Stephen appeared to enjoy so much that he refused to stop it, much to the doctor's annoyance, but finally she prescribed some medication for him that we picked up at once at the hospital's pharmacy and which Stephen promised to take religiously until the one-time prescription had been used up, and fortunately there never was another recurrence of such a bleeding occasion.

The only unpleasant after-effect of this unfortunate incident turned out to be the reaction of Stephen's mother, who called me the same evening after he had returned to Washington and told her about this melodramatic event. She demanded to know why I had not immediately

called her, following his nosebled. I explained to my ex that my primary concern at the time was to bring Stephen at once to the hospital since his medical misfortune really appeared to me to require immediate hospital attention; also that I did not want to frighten her before I knew for sure what had been ailing our son and, lastly, that there would have been no point in phoning her since there was nothing that could be done by her while she was two hundred miles away and every minute counted in giving Stephen the medical care he obviously needed. Still, as a loving mother, she was understandably horribly upset, believing rather suspiciously, I think, that I may have caused this tragic accident, and when I asked her What she would have done in similar circumstances, finding Stephen at night in his bed bleeding prosusely out of his ear and nose, especially after a peaceful and joyous time the evening before, my question was met by stony silence and she hung up on me. Probably I should have reminded her of a similar hospital occasion when shortly after our separation she had their first apartment in Silver Spring, Md., in 1969, and we watched five-year-old Stephen from her balcony going wildly up and down on the meighborhood playground swing and then jumping off from the highest point of the swing and landing in a huge circus-kind of leap through midair on the ground until the inevitable happened despite our repeated warnings: he had landed on his hands, instead of feet, and fractured one of his wrists.

It was a sickening crack of the bone that we could hear even on the second-story balcony as the wrist broke, but Stephen rose to his feet and simply stared in amazement at the limp hand hanging almost lifelessly from his lower arm. Within seconds my wife and I were downstairs and immediately took him to the nearest hospital.

Suffering from excruciating pain, he bit his lips and did not burst into tears, but his eyes slowly filled up and the tears glided down his pale cheeks. To me he behaved like a frightened but brave soldier under fire and I could not help hugging him and whispering into his ears how much I loved and admired him, and for about eight weeks after that accident he wore his plaster of Paris cast with pride and panache, having his friends sign it with sprightly well-wishes and signatures which he understandably liked to show off to everybody. But finally everything had healed beautifully and never showed any after-effects, not even during his later swimming contests, which turned out to be his favorite sport.

A short time later, at the age of ten, when Stephen still learned the craft of competition swimming, he came to visit me on a shuttle flight from Washington one Friday morning, and to my amazement the person whose hand he held arriving at the airline terminal was none other than that of CBS anchor-person Dan Rather. Evidently Stephen could not find his way back to his plane seat after visiting the restroom during the flight and simply settled down on a seat which happened to be vacant, the one next to Dan Rather. I thanked the newscaster profusely for his kindness and attention to my son, which the TV anchor accepted most graciously.

Several hours later, in the evening, we watched Mr. Rather's CBS newscast together and Stephen got so excited he had met his first celebrity ever that he called his mother immediately and gave her a ten-minute account of his initial brush with fame.

THE MISSING GRAVE AND OTHER REBUFFS. (1986)

It took me almost half a century after World War II to make up my mind to return to Germany for a visit in October 1986 after I had left my native country at the age of 16 in 1939 with a Kindertransport heading for England. To be on the safe side I asked my 22-year-old son Stephen to accompany me as a sort of moral support since I had no idea how I would react emotionally to the old sights, where I was born and later had spent six years under Hitler with my loved ones, who then perished in the Holocaust.

Already shortly after our arrival in Hamburg, I became aware of the first pangs of melancholia when staying at the 1929-built house of my uncle Max Fraenkel in Volksdorf near Hamburg. His daughter, my cousin Ulla, was still living there alone because her father had shot himself in 1938 after the Nazis had deprived him of his livelihood as a medical doctor since his parents, my grandparents, happened to be Jewish. Ulla's mother, my aunt Lotte, had died in 1983 in this beautiful Volksdorf villa at the ripe old age of 92, and Ulla's widowed sister Ilse Jochimsen was living now in her own gorgeous house in the village of Klein Hansdorf nearby.

To counter weigh my fear that the old familiar sights of Ilse and Ulla and the Volksdorf villa might upset me emotionally after almost half a century, I had taken Stephen along on this trans-Atlantic journey as a sort of psychological shoulder to cry on.

I need not have worried. The sincere joy with which we were welcomed by Ilse and Ulla soon erased the cobwebs of apprehension and not only made me feel welcome but also strengthened my resolve to enjoy the sights of old familiar faces and places. With Ulla, who never married, I went to concerts and museums in Hamburg and later, with her car, we visited the sights of Denmark (while Stephen preferred to stay with friends).

The Bechstein grand piano, on which I had heard my mother play in Uncle Max's house, Mozart fifty-five years earlier, continued to grace the immense sunny living-room; even the thirty specially planted rose trees bordering each side of the 100-meter-long gravel path all the way from the densely wooded Volksdorf Forest to the Fraenkel villa still stood eight ft. tall and flooded my mind with old long-forgotten memories; in particular the occasion when I stood on that endless, rose-perfumed path in 1932, aged nine, in my white sailor's outfit, touching one of those prickly flowers while my mother took a photo of me, which I still have.

To my astonishment nothing had changed. The same furniture, even the white garden bench, still stood in their old appointed places, and although religious services had played no part in the lives of the two sisters, one of them still had a picture hanging over her bed depicting Christ's thorn-crowned head - again, not for any religious reason, but because of its tricky effect: the longer you stared at it, the more it led you to believe that sometimes Christ's eyes gazed upon you while a few seconds later the eyes appeared to be closed.

One day I suggested to Ulla that I would like to visit my grandmother's apartment, where she had lived since the death, in 1925, of her husband, Professor Eugen Fraenkel, the discoverer of the bacterial decaying agent that causes the gangrene bacillus. That apartment was located about an hour's drive from Volksdorf on a street - Braamkamp - that led to the water tower in Hamburg's municipal park (Stadtpark).

Nothing in that building had changed either since the 1930s, including the fragrance of the linoleum-polish on the staircase leading up to her former apartment, which of course had long changed hands, since my grandmother, Marie Fraenkel, had died of malnutrition in the Nazi concentration camp of Theresienstadt in 1943, aged 82.

When I rang the doorbell of her old flat, a gray-haired lady opened and asked me what I wanted. I explained to her that I had

spent many of my summer vacations in the apartment of my grandmother back in the 1930s and whether she would permit it, if for old-time sakes, my cousin Ulla (who was accompanying me) and I could take a look around the place to see if the layout of the apartment at least would still cram my mind with old pre-war memories. The elderly tenant stared at me in disbelief, then, without uttering a word, slammed the door in our faces. I was stunned. I rang the doorbell again. Within a second she shouted through the closed door she would call the police if we did not leave the premises at once,and there was nothing further we could do about it.

Of course, I was deeply saddened that I had come so far after so many decades and now was deprived of that sentimental goal I had so often dreamed about, but later I realized that I could not really blame the woman for her suspicious reaction to my request, because under similar circumstances I probably would have responded in like manner.

Oddly enough, I tried to repeat the same procedure back in Berlin in the late 1980s when I visited the old apartment on Bundes Allee 10 (formerly Kaiser Allee 26) that I had shared for about ten years with my mother and sister until 1939. But there nobody ever opened the door after I had rung the bell a few times, and even when I went back on future visits to Berlin three or four more times, nobody ever answered the bell. However, each time I returned to the front entrance of the building, first walking through the backyard and looking up to one of the windows of our old apartment (in which,incidentally,my mother had always waved good-bye to me when I departed in the mornings for school), I saw a man watching me through that same old window. On those occasions I always called up to his fourth-floor apartment window whether I could speak to him

privately and within two seconds he simply shut the window and disappeared behind the curtains without uttering a single word of explanation. This hurt me deeply since even now, while putting down these words on paper in the twenty-first century, I am still incredibly attached to that place which I had shared with my mother and sister in Berlin about sixty-five years ago, throughout the 1930s.

I received the same treatment when I returned to Berlin as a guest of Berlin's mayor Eberhard Diepgen in April 1994. On that occasion, the very attractive and kind-hearted Brigitte Röper, who was in charge of our American group of ex-Berliners that had been invited by the city-government to spend a week in their native city, volunteered to accompany me to my old Berlin apartment, because she thought that a woman in the company of a man would ease my admission to my former flat. But, again, we received the same rebuff, and when Brigitte phoned the tenant that evening from a nearby restaurant and explained my past to him in a few words, the man simply hung up on her. Consequently, I could neither visit my grandmother's nor my own Berlin apartment ever again. (A few years after that trip to Berlin I read in the "Berlin Aktuell" magazine that this magnificent woman, Brigitte Röper, had died of cancer. The obituary was headed by a photo that I had taken of her the day she bid farewell to our group of ex-Berliners. I had sent her the picture and somebody must have found it among her belongings.)

However, it was still on my first postwar visit to Germany in 1986 that I decided to pay homage to the grave of my mother's father, Eugen Fraenkel, who has a street named after him in Hamburg and a plaque of his profile built into the wall of the huge Hamburg hospital - the Eppendorf Krankenhaus. Here he had besides being the discoverer of the gangrene bacillus, served for decades as the chief pathologist, writing countless

important medical papers and a number of books. (Years earlier, a life-size bust of him had been stolen there by what is assumed to have been a gang of neo-Nazis.)

But on that first return visit of mine to Germany my two Hamburg cousins, Ulla and Ilse, who were a few years older than me, visited the gravesite of my grandfather with me to pay our respects to him as well as to their own two young brothers who had died of diphteria back in the 1920s already. Although Ilse and Ulla admitted with some faint semblance of regret that both of them had not visited this gravesite, including thst of their own father Max, who had committed suicide in 1938, at the Ohlsdorf cemetery in several decades, both of them professed still to remember the long walk to the burial site, where virtually all of the Fraenkels had found their final resting place for well over half a century.

Another item all three of us recalled from this gravesite was the awesome eight-foot granite boulder with the name Fraenkel engraved on it, a monumental gravemarker it would have been impossible to miss.

But somehow the search for our family burial-ground evaded us completely. We walked around for a good hour or so, looking here and there, when I suggested that we pay a visit to the cemetery administration building to find out the exact location of the Fraenkel gravesite. I was also getting a bit tired and impatient, walking around with a large heavy wreath, decorated with white roses, that we had planned to lay on our family's grave.

Fortunately Ilse did remember that Eugen Fraenkel had died in December 1925 and the official in the cemetery administration building, who must have been close to eighty and had served there for almost sixty years, immediately withdrew an enormous leather-

bound volume from a long shelf with similar reference works, looking for the December 1925 burial site's location. And there it was! Eugen and Max Fraenkel as well as the entries for two young Claus Fraenkels - one of them living from 1921-1922, the other from 1924-1928 (my own earliest playmate). This indeed proved to be our family!

We explained to the administrator that we simply could not locate our family burial ground and he graciously consented to accompany us to its whereabouts. However, the look on his face soon enough revealed to us his own puzzlement since the directory precisely pinpointed the location of the Fraenkel gravesite and he also could not find it. He could neither understand the disappearance of the burial plot nor the absence of the huge ivy-overgrown granite rock with our grandfather's name carved into it. I even recalled from my own childhood that in this section of the cemetery all the graves were separated from each other by densely planted man-high evergreen shrubbery to grant each of the sites absolute privacy. When I asked the old administrator whether the Nazis might have destroyed the graves during the war since I distinctly remembered visiting the burial ground with my mother as late as December 1938, the old gentleman said that the Nazis never entered the cemetery, except on one occasion during World War II, when they removed the gravemarkers of those they suspected of being Jewish.

So there it was! The secret was out, the problem solved! Our grandfather's and my uncle's and two cousins' names: Fraenkel, sounded Jewish to them, so the Nazi authorities simply destroyed all visible evidence of the Fraenkel gravesite, ripped out the plants growing on the burialground (mostly forget-me-nots) and

thought that this proved to be the best way to turn the Jews into non-beings, as if they had never existed, never lived, never died. After the Nazi authorities had done their duty and desecrated the gravesites, they simply removed the Fraenkel boulder, planted evergreen shrubbery over it, and celebrated another Hitlerian triumph!

We learned later, since virtually all the Hamburg Jews had been sent to Nazi extermination camps, most of them to the death camps in Poland, and had perished there, that we three had actually been the first descendants of a Hamburg-Jewish family who had visited this cemetery in the postwar era. All the other Jews buried here now were totally unknown since none of the Hamburg families could ever pay homage to them, having been exterminated themselves. And so the Nazis had plundered even the gravesites of those who had found their final resting place there before Hitler had come to power in 1933. Another brave triumph for Fascism!

What about the coffins, the actual corpses that were buried in the no-longer sacred ground? Had the Nazi barbarians even been prompted to dig up the Jewish and non-Aryan remains?

To our relief we were told that this foul deed had never been implemented, although it had been ordered by the Nazi regime. The corpses, thank God, were still buried peacefully in the same hallowed grounds. Even more fortunate for us to learn proved to be the fact that the Nazis had never been informed about the existence of the old register of burials dating back to the early twentieth century, and that is the reason why my family's remains, their nameless bones, not only were still buried in Ohlsdorf, but just as important that their names and dates of birth and death were still untouched and visible in the cemetery's ancient register books.

And there we stood, dumbfounded and saddened by the explanation, except for the written testimony, that there now was nothing left but

the old evergreen shrubbery on the Fraenkel family plot. Their bones at least are still resting in peace over there; how much more fortunate than the bones of my parents and grandmother that had been pulverized by the German, Austrian Polish, and Ukranian concentration-camp guards prior to being sent in special containers to German Nazi farmers so that they could cultivate their fields for Hitler's murderous troops with their calcium-enriched skeletal ashes.

I asked the cemetery administrator what we were supposed to do with the beautiful wreath we had bought for our family site. He had the perfect solution. There was a Jewish cemetery near our grandfather's former grave - - he told us exactly how to reach it - - so why didn't we place it on one of these Jewish graves?

As an interesting sidelight he informed us that oddly enough the Nazis never realized that there was this adjacent Jewish cemetery, and consequently they had left it completely untouched in contrast to the graves on the Jewish Weissensee cemetery of Berlin, which the Hitler regime had largely desecrated.

So we retired once more past our grandfather's invisible grave and placed the beautiful wreath adorned with white roses on a postwar memorial specially erected for the Jews of Hamburg, including my mother's mother, who had virtually all of them been exterminated in the Holocaust. It gave us a sort of faint satisfaction, but in the end we left Ohlsdorf with mixed feelings.

A few years later, in 1982, my dear cousin Ulla died of lung cancer in her house in Volksdorf near Hamburg, aged seventy-five. All of her life she had lived only in the healthiest of climates and never smoked a cigarette. Her ashes were scattered over the North Sea. The 42,000 Hamburg citizens killed by Allied airraids in July 1943 had mostly been cremated in the Hanseatic town's fire storm.

They are lost forever. All that is left of Eugen Fraenkel, my Hamburgian grandfather's claim to fame today, besides the Eppendorf monument and the street named in his honor, are some long entries in a couple of German encyclopediae and about a dozen listings of his books in the United States' "National Union Catalogue Pre-1956 Imprints."

A SCARY SUMMER-DAY IN WINDHAM. (1987)

Whenever I spent a week or two of my 1980s summer vacations in New York's Catskill Mountains, particularly near Windham, I made it a rule to stay at a lovely place, one of the oldest inns in New York State, Christman's Windham House. For the most part, the retired Irish-American summer vacationaers there either played golf on the Christman's spacious grounds, went for a swim in their pristine pool, or some of us would walk into the village about a mile-and-a-half away and enjoy a milkshake sitting outside Toderos, the local delicatessen. Here some of the guests of our inn often peppered me with questions about my life in Europe before the war, since for the most part they had never met a refugee from Nazi Germany and were almost totally ignorant of anything relating to the Holocaust or even the Blitz on London, where I had served for a while in the Auxiliary Fire Service (AFS) during the war. I could also regale them with my experiences at Sir Eustace Pulbrook's million-pound home in Woking outside London and my acquaintance with Leslie Howard there and, on one occasion, with his son Ronald, whom everybody called "Blinkie," although some of these decent Windham old-timers had never heard of the actor, being more familiar with baseball and football players, of which I was totally ignorant. Of course, none of them had ever seen the quarter-page ad of my novel "The Iron Virgin" in the March 1, 1987 "New York Times Book Review Magazine," and although virtually all of these kindhearted vacationers are gone now, some of them stand out in my mind for their comradely sweetness and, later, their lovely letters to me, in particular Lou and Anne Morse, Chick and Evelyne Engel, and Paul and Anita Amole.

Often, for hours on end, the ever-young Roberta Christman, who owned and ran the place with her ever-busy husband, Stanley, a former science teacher at Windham's High School, would listen till late at night to some of my 1930s and 1940s adventurous tales from England and Nazi Germany, while Roberta's husband and their son and daughter-in-law, Brian and Ruth,

still tinkered around the grounds and left the receptionist's job and telephone advance bookings till midnight to Roberta. In-between, the tasty meals were being served to us most proficiently by the friendly mother-daughter team, Helen and Sandy.

During the day I would often sit by the fenced-in swimming pool under a large beach umbrella, writing and revising some of my novels and non-fiction manuscripts, or go for long walks visiting the highly organized Tuttle Farm to watch the cows being milked there.

Only once, it turned out to be not so much the sights of Windham but the natural elements that caused all of us - staff and guests alike - to burst out into loud "oooohs" and "aaaahs" one early October morning - the fourth to be precise - in 1987. Quite unexpectedly, it had snowed all night long and when we had dressed to go in our summer fineries to have breakfast in the gorgeous 200-year-old main building, our path there was blocked by at least twenty inches of now. Moreover, trees still full of their yellow-flecked fall foliage, had collapsed, being unable to support the weight of the wet snow on every leaf and branch, and yet for me at least it was like living in a paradise of overwhelming beauty: wherever one looked, the most picturesque snowscapes under an azure sky; a heaven-sent fairytale-land for my ever-ready camera. Every bush and tree still standing upright appeared to be dressed in pristine white ermine coats, although the vacationing golfers gazed forlornly and almost suicidally through the frosted window panes at the hidden greens of the golf course. Obviously, this turned out to be a day on which I could not pay a visit to the village or spend some time with its true town character, Jules Ehrlich, who lived with his wife Grace right above the delicatessen and made it a rule to engage every tourist to Windham in a long-winded conversation, holding him or her captive by grasping their wrists.

But these two dear people are also long gone.

One day, however, something entirely unforeseen did happen to me after getting my New York Times in the village. It must have been around 1:30 in the afternoon (a few days before the snowfall) when Paul Amole and I (the two Pauls of Windham House) sauntered back single-file on the narrow sidestrip of the highway past the local fire house and a Ukrainian house of worship up on a hill just outside of Windham. I kept walking a few steps ahead of Paul, asking him whether the autumn heat affected him as much as it did me, and when he didn't reply, I turned around to repeat the question to him, but to my amazement I found Paul standing stockstill, staring at me. Again I posed my question, puzzled that he didn't follow me since sandwich lunches at Christman's usually were being served punctually from 12 noon to 2 p.m. in their large barn and we only had about twenty minutes left to get back there and clean up first. When Paul still refused to answer my totally innocuous question and frowned at me without budging an inch, it was my turn to frown and register concern and surprise. Point-blank I asked him why he had stopped dead in his tracks and wouldn't even answer my question.

He kept staring at me suspiciously as I retraced my steps and approached him, increasingly perplexed, and then he posed a question that caused me to come to a dead stop and stare at him even more puzzled. What he asked was: "Who are you? Why're you talking to me?"

After a moment's shock and hesitation, I tried to put on a friendly face and wanted to know whether this was some kind of a joke, his questioning me about my identity. His response chilled me even more: "I'm serious. I don't like being addressed by total strangers."

"What d'you mean?" I shot back. "Total strangers who have

known each other for years?"

"I've never seen you before in my life," Paul snapped at me. "And I don't appreciate that sort of joke."

"What joke?" I asked, feeling a cold shiver running down my spine as I stood there on a broiling hot October day a mile from nowhere. "Is it a joke buying the Times for me and Anita and going back to Windham House?"

His next twowords almost stopped my heart. "Who's Anita?"

Only after a few seconds' silence to get over my shock that he would question me about the identity of his wife did I approach him apprehensively, trying my best to put on a carefree face to cover my inner bewilderment.

When I was about half a dozen yards from him, he seemed to snap out of what I could only assume must have been some sort of a trance, because just as suddenly he resumed his walk, and his old friendly smile began to soften his frozen features. It was at that juncture that he questioned me why I didn't continue to walk ahead.

This time it was my turn to be completely confused as we resumed our way back to the Windham House.

I asked him whether his strange behavior had been some sort of a joke. He stopped again and frowned at me. "What strange behavior?" he demanded. "What 're you taking about?"

I explained what I was referring to and he burst into a short unamused guffaw of laughter, telling me that I better make an appointment to see a shrink because he had never questioned me about my identity. Or was I trying to pull a fast one on him, some stupid joke that did not really amuse him one bit?

Later that day when I found Anita practicing some golf shots by herself while Paul was taking his afternoon nap, I reported his strange behavior to her and asked whether that was part of his sense

of humor, because in that case it had not struck me as very funny.

Anita stared at me and grabbed my arm, telling me that a similar incident of that nature had occurred when she was with Paul at their New Jersey home just a few days earlier and that she thought that he had been playing a trick on her when he claimed for a few minutes that he did not know her. What upset her most of all was that he now seemed to exhibit the same sort of asocial conduct with me: it really bothered her.

There were no more incidents like this for the remainder of our vacation. But several weeks later, after I had mailed some holiday snapshots of the Amoles to their Wayne, N.J. home, she replied that Paul's behavior had become so alien lately, when he kept questioning her about her identity over and over, that she finally made an appointment with a clinic where a catscan and X-rays and the status of his brainwaves determined that Paul was suffering from the initial stages of Alzheimer's.

His mental dissolution became more and more pronounced over the following months and the clearheaded interludes rarer and rarer until his brave wife found it harder and harder to handle the dreaded disease in their home and Paul finally succumbed to it in a sanatorium - a brilliant mind, a wonderful human being gone to waste.

Anita took his death well in stride, realizing perhaps that his passing turned out to be a relief for both him and for her. She had always been an accomplished painter, and soon after Paul's death she sent me a magnificent oil of an old barn in the back of the Windham House, an appropriately framed 10" x 12" work of art I treasure greatly and that hangs to this day in my studio apartment. In the late 1990s Anita also went to her just rewards and I miss both Amoles enormously.

THE FICKLENESS OF LOVE. (1988)

A wonderful/amatory union going to waste happened to be the relationship my son Stephen enjoyed with a most charming young woman he met and had an affair with in Berlin in 1986-1987: Nicole Ciolek.

At that time Stephen worked for an entire year in Berlin, having the added advantage of being familiar with the German language, in which his mother had frequently conversed with him since his Kindergarten days in 1969.

To my great regret the love Stephen felt for Nicole seemed to fizzle out a little while after he had returned to the United States, even though the young couple had lived together in Berlin for a little while. There was no doubt in my mind that Nicole happened to be the partner who suffered much more from the break-up of the relationship than my son, and I actually had a chance to meet Nicole a year later, in 1988, when visiting my cousin Ursula (Ulla) Fraenkel in Germany in her lovely parental house in Volksdorf outside Hamburg.

Both Ulla and I made a point of inviting Nicole to stay with us for a few autumn days and she grabbed the opportunity to visit Hamburg for the first time in her life and meet Stephen's father and empty her heart to him.

I was pleasantly surprised by Nicole, a very attractive and intelligent mid-twenties girl from Berlin, who often entertained us at night on Ulla's Bechstein grand; in fact, she turned out to be an accomplished pianist both in jazz and classical music.

Mostly, the three of us took daily rides as far away as Travemünde in Ulla's car, frequented the sights of the Hanseatic city, attended a few concerts at night, and on one occasion when Ulla was busy in the city all morning Nicole and I had our sole

heart-to-heart chat (in English, which she could converse in without any difficulty) in the romantic Volksdorf Forest,

On no occasion, though, did Nicole ever burst into tears or turn bitter and assign blame to Stephen for the end of their romance; instead she emptied her heart to me in a most moving fashion and unapologetic manner, admitting how much (at the time) she still loved my son.

We must have talked and walked in the Hansel and Gretel wood for three or four hours, because both of us returned frozen and hungry to Ulla, who had come back earlier than anticipated from her Hamburg appointment and became genuinely alarmed by our prolonged and unplanned absence. Perhaps this long confidential talk had some beneficial effect on Nicole, but at least it seemed to clear the air for her because I did notice that in the last few remaining days with Ulla and me she appeared to be much more at ease and cheerful in her relationship with us. In fact, she had tears in her eyes when we bade adieu to her at the Hamburg airport before she returned to her apartment in Berlin's Haehnelstrasse.

We still corresponded in the warmest and family-kind of manner for a few more years, and from all these personal contacts with her my own wish has forever been fortified by the hope that this former union of Nicole and Stephen could or should have been cemented into a holy matrimony of a lifelong bond. Unfortunately, it was not to be. My son alone had taken that sad decision.

Oddly enough, Stephen told me quite a bit later that for many years after their separation he still corresponded with her occasionally and that this bright and pretty, young woman had remained unmarried even at the beginning of the new millennium.

Poor Nicole - - love can be hell!

C AND SYMPATHY. (1997)

God in His Heaven must have had other plans for me, because six weeks after retiring from my job at Sterling Publishing Company in early 1997 at the age of seventy-four, my urologist, Dr. Elliot J. Nadelson, informed me after taking my semi-annual prostate biopsy for about six years that this time the medical lab already had discovered some cancer cells. Naturally this came as a terrible blow to me. But since I did not want to have any more children at my age and in any case had no plans to get married for a third time, I opted to have the prostate removed altogether.

Not surprisingly, I also had to go through the preliminaries of visiting four labs for thorough physical examinations prior to my surgery to make sure that the cancer had not spread to neighboring organs: my lungs, bones, stomach and liver. These four weeks of having to wait for the result of those lab tests proved to be more harrowing and nerve-racking, for me at least, than the eventual operation that promised to excise the offending prostate. At no time did any of the labs tell me what the X-rays revealed. I was informed that to obtain this vital information I would have to contact the urologist who would perform the operation on me since he alone had the authority to communicate these good or bad tidings to me personally.

For four unbearable weeks I had to sweat out this tedious waiting period, like thousands of other men every year, and only then, shortly before my actual surgery, did I learn from Dr. Nadelson that the cancer had not spread yet to neighboring organs, which - understandably - proved a great relief to me. Moreover, I had never detected any of the more common symptoms as far as this particular cancer was concerned: no loss of sleep or appetite, no blood

in the urine, nor did I experience any difficulties in urinating, a problem affecting most men with an enlarged prostate. The only problem I had from a medical (though not physical) point of view was the fact that my prostate was swollen and my PSA (prostate-specific antigen) count for years uncommonly high - - a bloodtest which first alerts the medical profession that the prostate might be or become cancerous. The PSA bloodcount can be considered normal if it remains within the range of one through four for most patients, but since my count had climbed for a number of years already to an elevated fifteen, the danger that the prostate might be cancerous became quite evident to Dr. Nadelson. And yet, miraculously, for quite a few years no cancerous cells had ever been spotted on my prostate, even during the biopsy procedures when six or eight snippets were usually being removed rectally from that organ, a process that can also be observed on the office-lab TV-screen by the doctor and patient while the excisions are being performed. It is a most demeaning exercise for the helpless patient, but a true lifesaver if the cancer is thus detected at an early stage and can be removed before spreading to other vital organs.

This medical office process was not available a quarter of a century ago and only the advance of new techno-medical inventions is gradually saving the lives of countless thousands of male patients who have prostate problems and might otherwise perish as so many men still do when they choose not to undergo this rather embarrassing medical process or believe that their state of health is in perfect condition because they are aware of no adverse physical problems and consequently feel they do not need to go for a medical test.

I had seen Dr.Nadelson, a charming, warmhearted and able physician and surgeon early in March 1997, having just retired a couple of months earlier from my office job,

and after no symptoms whatsoever/ were discovered in my pre-1997 physical state and I was seriously considering at that period in time to make plans for a trip that spring or summer to see the sights of the Orient, I entered his private office on East 12th Street in Manhattan as usual without the slightest trepidation. Wham! Because there, in a most Samaritan manner, he informed me that the long-expected cancer had finally materialized and been detected by the lab, ~~he did not expect it had spread yet to any of the neighboring organs since only a few months had elapsed when my last test was taken and no physical evidence of the cancer had been noted at that time, or by me since then.~~

Prostate cancer is a sneaky disease, the ever-sympathetic Dr.Nadelson explained to me, even if there are no visible symptoms, in that it frequently invades neighboring organs without any side effects at first...until in many cases it may turn out to be too late to save the patient's life.

My heart sank. My stomach knotted into a tight little ball. I had not smoked cigarettes in almost half a century and virtually never enjoyed the taste of alcoholic beverages, always paying attention to healthy living, leading an active physical and mental life. But Dr.Nadelson assured me that even the healthiest of living methods were no guarantee that cancer would not strike and that I should be psychologically and mentally strong enough to last through the next four weeks when my neighboring organs would be minutely examined to ascertain that the cancer had indeed not invaded any of them. He was right: mentally and psychologically,these four weeks can kill a man since waiting for the results hour by hour, day by day,is worse than the Chinese water torture.

Dr.Nadelson also proved to be right with his prediction that these

physical examinations were exhausting, demeaning and embarrassing, lying there naked for fifteen to thirty minutes under huge X-ray machines just half-an-inch from your exposed body and having the staff probe the helpless shivering patient in excruciating detail and in slow-motion to detect the feared cancer that was not self-inflicted as in most cases of AIDS or smoking, but is nothing more than a stroke of bad luck that Mother Nature loved to dish out with total indifference to anybody she likes to hurt in a rather sadistitc off-handed manner.

True enough, the physical exposure to the medical staff in four different New York City lab locations over a period of thirty days was a matter of absolute abomination to me, but the alternative of death made me grit my teeth and spit fate in its face. I told myself it would prove to be better and safer for me to feel humiliated in front of the indifferent probing medical staff for maybe half an hour or so than to end up prematurely in a wooden box or an urn.

Of course, those are the bits of medical news items that are never divulged in TV dramas, where mostly a smiling and sympathetic hospital crew keeps the patient in a melodramatic state of brotherly confidence and witty give-and-take repartees.

Nothing of the kind ever happened in my case. No nurse at New York's Beth Israel Medical Center ever held my hand or whispered to me to be courageous and optimistic. Even though the hospital staff could never be considered rude or unhelpful, none of them ever displayed the same Samaritan attitude toward me at least, that the TV hospital dramas conveyed to their gullible and captive audiences.

Nor can these fictitious plays ever communicate the blood-chilling embarrassment when I was wheeled on a mobile bed into the hospital operation theater where Dr.Nadelson and about fifteen other medicos and nurses awaited my arrival and stared at my ge-

nital area as if it were a newly arrived rock from the moon, especially after my pubic hair had just been shaved off by a Hispanic male nurse's aid, who could not communicate with me in English.

It took about twenty hours for the anaesthesia to wear off after the successful surgery, even though a tube and urine-bag remained attached to my male member and calf; in fact, it took me the better part of a week to get used to these new contraptions until Dr. Nadelson, on one of my visits to his office, removed this cumbersone contraption two weeks later in his office with a sudden hard yank.

But while I was still a patient inside the hospital, a nurse pushed me in a wheelchair to its street-level exit, said good-bye, and I was on my own, alone, deserted and weak in the bitter cold. Feeling whoozy, I hailed a cab and thirty minutes later I lay down on my sofa at home, thanking God that I had survived the entire ordeal, my life's only operation at the age of seventy-four, except for the removal of a bomb splinter in December 1944 in London.

A truly helpful private nurse from the West Indies, the Jamaican Marcia Johnson, who was about thirty years old, took care of my shopping as well as the cleaning of my apartment, the cooking and taking me for short walks in the neighborhood for a couple of weeks. Thanks to her sweet-natured efficiency, my life could resume its course halfway normally again.

To top it off, I recuperated for a week on the Recreation Farm in Fosterdale, N.Y. and had her with me as a nurse's companion, much to her delight since, foremost, I still paid her a full-time salary and because she truly loved the German refugees from the Hitler era there, the three meals a day, the long walks we took on a private path into the adjacent pine-scented Catskill woods, a pure-aired New York State region she delighted

in, yet had never even heard of before. It proved to be the best time of her life, she said.

Since I had stayed there for my vacations quite a few times before, ever since the mid-1950s, my relationship with some of the guests at the Recreation Farm (now renamed "The Meadows") became increasingly solid and endures to this day. Most of them are widows now in their late seventies and early eighties. However, Gertrude Pollack celebrated her one hundredth birthday in 2001 and still reads "The New York Times" every day. Then there is Anne Polte, who used to work at Bloomingdale's and, now in her eighties, calls me every day to discuss personal and world events; a good but lonely person who I try to cheer up during our telephone conversations; And I also enjoy calls from Marianne Denerling and her good friend, the Dutch-born poet Margot de Hartog. Both of them have invited me several times for dinner to their lovely Queens apartment. Helga Elb, who, like me, is still a lively walker and talker, often shares her dramatic lifestory with me. Then there's also John Stockton's widely-read and good-natured wife Gloria, whose parents had the foresight to leave Germany early in the Nazi period and emigrate to South America, where Gloria was born, before settling down in the United States. And I will not forget the nonagenarians, the ever-young Karla Degen and the lively Margarete Eulau, who even in her late eighties always turned out to be the life of the party in Fosterdale, but frequently so was Lotte Forro, a reserved yet brilliant conversationalist. Another friend was Natasha Koniahin, who had left Europe after the war and worked with me, looking after U.S.-bound immigrants, and actually did so for over fifty years, but finally she settled in Staten Island to be near her daughter Olga and grandchildren. I will always be grateful, moreover, to enjoy the

friendship of a former Sterling coworker of mine, Loretta Reynolds, who took such good care of me after my eye surgery in 2001.

A wonderful companion of mine, Eve Sadler, still meets me monthly for a nine-hour-long lunch and dinner at the cool, comfortable house of our good mutual friend, the indestructible and sociable nonagenarian Maria Kadzidlowski, just a few blocks from where I live in Jackson Heights. These two dear ladies first came to my attention at a party given by Vera Gary at her apartment back in the eighties, but Vera, a secretary of my first medical doctor in Queens, Dr. Sanford Gould, ~~[illegible]~~ moved to Florida ten years later to work there for her son, Gregory, who owns a beauty parlor and other enterprises in Tampa.

In retrospect, it seems strange that I have virtually no male friends, only the most delightful and entertaining conversationalists of the opposite sex.

To me, my friendship and companionship with Anne and Helga, Margot and Marianne, Maria and Eve, Natasha, Loretta and Gloria, have not only sweetened the drabness of the life of this octogenarian, whose debilitating consequences of the post-operative prostate cancer have occasionally tended to tear down his physical and psychological defense apparatus, but all these darling females, I feel, have also actually been responsible, at their own late stage in life, for helping to prolong and strengthen my own spirits at times with their gentle words and helpful sociability as well as with their individual intelligence, courage and invincibility.

So I salute them wholeheartedly, but simultaneously, of course, my heart also goes out to my medical saviors: To Dr. Nadelson, naturally, then to my regular M.D., the calm and ever-efficient Dr. Medhat F. Sami as well as his able and amiable assistant Dr. John Kelly (and their cheerful secretary Mary); and to my two wonderful ophthalmologists, whose expert eye-surgeries undoubtedly prevented me from going blind in my late seventies: Dr. Ben Cohen and Dr. Marc Rosenblatt.

The former performed an operation on me, taking care of my glaucoma while his secretary Nila performed her duties like a true Samaritan, and the latter removed a cataract from my left eye.

This is not surprising. Approaching one's eighties, the physical machinery of the human body begins to show signs of wear and tear here and there and on occasion must be overhauled. That's why I do call myself fortunate that otherwise virtually everything from head to toe, in my case at least, is still in pretty good working condition. Starting with the toes, they and my feet are regularly being handled with expert care by my chiropodist, Dr. James Anarella, just a couple of blocks from where I live, while the northernmost part of my physique, the teeth, requires little else (not even the filling of a cavity) but a periodical cleaning by my most capable neighborhood dentist, Dr. Mark Zarnitzky.

By the same token, I have known no medical doctor as long as the man who has cut and groomed my hair magnificently for more than a quarter of a century just two minutes from my apartment, William Ricevuto. Only after all those twenty-five years with him did I finally learn from a July 2002 issue of "Newsday" that William actually was a director of the Jackson Heights Beautification Group and the president of its local garden club, that he also served as a clown for two decades already in the Macy Thanksgiving Day Parade and even as a scoutmaster in Bayside for eight long years.

Meanwhile, near William's barbershop, my daily shopping at the neighborhood C-Town supermarket has been made doubly pleasant for me by its diligent foreman Paul Fernandez, with whom I can enjoy a con-versation about any subject under the sun every day of the week.

However, after these outside chores are completed, I can always retire to the comfort of my quiet fifth-floor apartment,

which is surrounded by polite, quiet and helpful neighbors, a most important ingredient of healthy and pleasant living. Especially I get quite a kick out of my next=door-neighbor, Lee, who can always be depended on to engage me in an amiable and erudite chat. Even the Vietnamese-born Chinese Mrs. Cheung across the hallway gives me great pleasure when I have to explain a few English passages to her from some document or form-letter she had received.Unnnecessarily, she then rewards me for this minute chore with the gift of some yogurth, an apple or a pear she always buys in an Orientsl supermarket nearby.

Altogether my street and building, with its carefully groomed lawn fronting it, invariably are being kept immaculately clean and in mint condition by the most capable Nino Pena and his two hard-working,ever-friendly helpmates David Mojica and Luis Rodriguez. (My God, what a difference from the scary Nazi super ("Portier"), Herr Spiller, my family used to have in the Berlin of the 1930s!)

No wonder I love living in Jackson Heights.

OF SAINTS AND SINNERS. (1930-plus)

In spite of Frau Oberstleutnant Obermayer's truly smarting slap in my face back in 1936 (see chapter "Signing and Slapping"), I still consider that old lady, in retrospect, a much more humane person, who knew about my religious background, than Pope Pius XII, who had the power to help many more of the persecuted Jews in Fascist Italy and other Nazi-dominated countries than he actually did, but his well-documented dislike of the Jews is fully described in John Cromwell's 1999 book "Hitler's Pope."

Tragically, not even after World War II, when he and his devout followers had nothing to fear from the Catholic Hitler and his henchmen, did Pius XII ever proclaim an outright condemnation of the Holocaust, of which the Vatican had been informed in the early 1940s. And not even for the thirteen years that he still ruled after World War II did the pope, like some other religious leaders, ever directly refer to the Jews' persecution by their Nazi tormentors as most of the other popes did following his reign, particularly John XXIII and John Paul II.

In fact, newly uncovered documents in U.S. archives now reveal Pope Pius XII's warning, as reported in a letter dated June 22, 1943 by A.G.Cicognani, the Pope's special representative, to the U.S. Vatican Ambassador Myron Taylor, that the "Hebrew race" not be given a homeland in Palestine (but elsewhere) after the war. The letter makes clear that Catholics the world over would be aroused and the Holy See be saddened by such a move.

Right or wrong, in retrospect it is sad to realize that the Pope at the height of the Holocaust, of which he was aware, would ignore post-war Jewish aspirations for the Jewish homeland, but would never express his own feelings for the desperate plight of Europe's Jews to the Führer himself, having little to fear from him.

Probably it would have done little good, but at least it might have proven to future generations that Pope's worthiness to be elevated to sainthood one day.

Perhaps his refusal to speak up even for Italy's Jews can be traced to a sign of gratitude the Holy Father felt for Hitler actually being the sole post-World War I Austro-German chancellor to sign the 1933 church-state concordat, which granted the Vatican near-total religious control over its German Catholic flock -- one third of the Third Reich's population, a pact that gave Hitler his first diplomatic success.

During the war, though, Pius XII did protest (unsuccessfully) to the Nazis when they sent those Romans to the death camps who decades earlier had converted from Judaism to Catholicism. Moreover, the Vatican did keep thousands of Italian Jews in hiding shortly before Rome fell to the Allies in June 1944. At that time it had finally become clear to the Fascists and the Vatican that the democracies would win World War II.

Nevertheless, it must be regretted that even though the Vatican lately never embraced a belief in Jewish biological inferiority, as the Nazis did from the outset, there still were countless components of overt anti-Semitism that the Roman Catholic Church shared with Hitler. For instance, David I. Kertzer's book "The Popes Against the Jews" (Knopf) points out how the Church's press disseminated the knowingly mendacious "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," and in not a single one of its parochial newspapers ever protested Hitler's anti-Semitic Nuremberg Laws of 1935, but instead spread from many of its pulpits the calumny that Jews were by nature immoral, cared only for money, controlled the world's banks and press, were unpatriotic and responsible not only for Communism (since when were Lenin and Stalin Jewish? Or Malenkov, Brezhnev and Khrushchev?), but that they were also responsible

for the economic ruination of Christians besides being ready to betray their native country to the enemy for money.

But if there was one non-German person Hitler preferred even to the Pope, it was undoubtedly Henry Ford, the only American he mentioned in his "Mein Kampf." In fact, the Führer admired him so much that, at one time, he had a portrait of the American industrialist in his office. The dictator actually regarded Ford as an inspiration to him, as Hitler remarked to a Detroit News reporter in 1931. The reason was simple: Ford always ignored all objections from the U.S. Anti-Defamation League, which had accused the Ford-supported "Independent" newspaper of Dearborn, Michigan and his own publication of "The International Jew" of the non-stop stream of anti-Semitic persiflage...that is, until a Jew, wrongly accused by Ford of controlling the wheat market, sued the automobile tycoon, who quickly chose to settle out of court.

Consequently, in 1927 Ford claimed he had no idea of the anti-Jewish sentiments expressed in his paper and stopped printing it until Hitler came to power in 1933. The "The International Jew" came also out again, and Ford contributed heavily to the Nazi cause until, in 1938, the two German consuls in Detroit and Cleveland, Hailer and Kapp, bestowed Nazi Germany's highest honor on him, the Grand Cross of the Supreme Order of the German Eagle.

Only after the U.S. had entered World War II did Ford suddenly disclaim any dislike for the Jews, stating so in a letter to Sigmund Livingston, the national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League. At the same time, throughout the war, the Ford Motor Company in Dearborn lost control of its German Nazi subsidiary, which profited greatly from using slave labor and prompted the U.S. company after the war to donate four million dollars for studies on slave labor, etc.

And so, guilt is attributed belatedly to some and not to others, especially when discussing responsibility for some of the most heinous medical experiments performed on concentration camp inmates.

Until recently, for instance, the main culprit of this criminal activity has been the infamous Auschwitz /Dr. Josef Mengele (the Angel of Death), although only recently it was discovered that the real mastermind behind those senseless bestial experiments, which never produced any medical or scientific results of lasting value for the future, happened to be Mengele's supervisor, a former German Ph.D.,Ottomar von Verschuer. In fact, American Professor Robert Proctor, an authority on Nazi science, announced in the twenty-first century that Verschuer and other criminal practitioners of the Final Solution went scot-free after the war, with Verschuer actually becoming the head of the Anthropology Institute in Berlin and a leading post-war human geneticist.

Many of those World War II crimes were known in high U.S. government circles as early as August 1942 when the German industrialist Eduard Schulte revealed the Wannsee Conference substance of the planned mass extermination of Europe's Jews to Dr. Gerhard Riegner of the World Jewish Congress, but,of course, all to no avail. Virtually no air /-force action was ever contemplated to alleviate the plight and suffering of Nazi concentration camp prisoners during the war since such measures were considered unproductive as far as the military /war effort was concerned.

And so the Jews, the gays, the Social-Democrats and pacifists were sacrificed and went up the chimney stacks in smoke at Auschwitz and other camps.

Yet what kept some of these survivors alive as well as mentally and psychologically alert after the war was a healthy gallows

humor,producing, for example,the famous reply to the 1945 question: Why did Hitler commit suicide? Answer: Because he got the Auschwitz gas bill.

Such gallows humor,though,pales when one compares it to the 2001 U.N. gift of five million dollars to the Palestinian cause, which includes destroying newly erected Jewish temples in Jerusalem and driving the Jews out of Israel

Naturally,Sabri,the Mufti of Jerusalem,immediately claimed in the German paper Die Welt in 2001 that "no ancient Jewish temple in Jerusalem ever existed or that there is a single stone indicating Jewish history," a rather odd statement considering that the Jewish temples are mentioned in the Koran.

At least Sabri is a Jew-hating Muslim who claims that the Holocaust never existed and, like Arafat, suddenly discovered that Jesus was born a Palestinian, not a Jew.

From that ilk one cannot expect anything else. That's why one can only be amazed that a man like the late Catholic Bishop Jan Voitassak should ever have been considered for sainthood. Oh yeah, he was an anti-Communist all right, but it is also known that he served as a Slovak clergyman who happened to be a voluntary senior official in the virulently anti-Semitic pro-Nazi Slovak government during World War II and never once, even after the war, protested the murder of thousands of Jews and anti-Nazis or ever apologized for his bureaucratic participation in the bloodbath of innocent Slovak civilians during the war. And this happy comrade of the Nazis a saint?

It also makes you wonder why,after the liberation of the death camps under the Nazis in 1945, the Holy Father never even considered one of the decade-long requests the free world had been begging for:

~~never did the pope ever excommunicate~~ excommunicating Adolf Hitler. As a matter of fact, (in the twelve years) Hitler ruled over Germany, then most of Europe, his policies were responsible for killing more men of the cloth than Stalin had murdered in the same period. Yet - and with good reason - Pius XII condemned the Communist dictator's mass murder of his clergy, though never directly the Führer's, while he governed.

In fact, if anybody should be elevated to sainthood among the twentieth-century popes for their courageous pronouncements and their brave deeds during the war, it should be the postwar Popes John XXIII and John Paul II!

Nonetheless, when it comes to anti-Semitism, Pope Pius XII could still have learned something altogether even more virulent and abominable from the appointed leading cleric of the Palestinian Authority, which is the officially political mouthpiece of Islam in the Middle East. He put it bluntly this way: "Have no mercy on the Jews, no matter where they are, in any country. Fight them where they are. Wherever you meet them, kill them!"

Hitler couldn't have put it more adroitly.

Still, somebody should tell the Muslim Palestinian Authority (and the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem) that less than one third of one percent of the world's population is Jewish (18 million out of more than six billion) and has been for the last fifteen years.

Also, do compare the insignificant size of Israel to the adjacent huge landmass belonging to the Arab world on the map and it boggles the mind why the Muslims' mission for over half a century has been to deprive the Jews of their ancient homeland, especially when the Muslims (and Christians) have always been given absolute freedom to live in Israel in peace and practice their own religion and trade without fear of persecution.

Instead, for decades now, Arab children have been taught at home and in school (even in currently Israeli-occupied territory) to hate the Jews worldwide and to prepare for the day that they can drive every Jew in "Palestine" into the sea.

And if professional anti-Semites proclaim that the Jews dominate the world's commerce, especially in New York City (which is not true), one can equally point out that these anti-Jews should statistically prove this preposterous contention and list, maybe, a dozen Jews that control the commercial field of the United States to the detriment of the people as a whole.

Even more important, it has been established that more than half the population of New York City today is made up of African-Americans and Hispanics, according to the latest census of 2000. (In 1950 they made up ten percent.) As a matter of fact, there are now forty million African-Americans and Hispanics in the United States, (as compared to just six million Jews in a total population of almost 300 million inhabitants) and nobody is preventing this huge majority of 40 million from trying their own hand at venture capitalism. Moreover, in the last hundred years, it is not the Jews who were flooding the U.S. with immigrants but the Hispanics as well as the other other legals and the nine million illegals from Nigeria, Bangladesh, Russia, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, Egypt and other countries (according to TIME of February 4, 2002), with [illegible] the U.S. still allowing a million new immigrants to enter this land each year and virtually none of them codified as politcal refugees at the beginning of the 21st century.

Yet in the 1930s, Washington refused to let a puny 300,000 educated, law-abiding German Jews come to these American shores. Virtually all of them perished a few years later in Nazi gas chambers. As JFK pointed out: Who says that life is fair!

And figure this out: The World War II Memorial on Washington's Mall is to be partly built by a German-owned company -- Philipp Holzmann AG -- that actually used concentration-camp slave labor during the war. Fifty-seven years after that war, finally Holzmann has promised to contribute money to surviving Nazi-forced workers to compensate them for their World War II slave labor...provided,of course,these former slave laborers are still alive and can be located. And they can prove they were slave laborers.

Still, if anybody can be held mostly responsible for those Jewish victims who had been denied entry into the United States during the Hitler period, it certainly was not the pope or even the much-maligned President Franklin D.Roosevelt. Instead,blame can be rightfully laid on the doorsteps of two openly racist anti-Semitic and anti-black U.S. Senators of the 1930s, T.G.Bilbo and John Rankin and, most of all, the State Department's Assistant Secretary Breckenridge Long, who was known to be a hater of Jews and a sympathizer of Hitler's Third Reich. In fact, he actually did succeed in helping to fill the small German immigration quota with Aryans at the expense of non-Aryan hopefuls, with this author's family being among those later to be denied access to America's safe shores, then killed in a Nazi extermination camp.

Although there will always be human beings hating those they consider inferior -- Jews, people of different color, Catholics, Muslims, you name it -- the U.S. certainly has made great strides in eradicating such prejudice. Nevertheless, even in the immediate post-World War II era, anti-Semitism had become so rampant and widespread among American GI's inspite of the newsreels showing the pitiful state of Nazi concentration camp survivors, President Truman ordered General Eisenhower to investigate the abuse of the surviving Jews on the continent in September 1945. And to add insult to injury,in contrast to the hundreds of thousands of hardcore

German Nazi POWs that had been shipped to the United States and interned there during World War II, virtually none of them were ever exposed to anti-German insults and taunts by the American population surrounding the POW camps while the few Jewish wartime refugees interned near Oswego, N.Y. were frequently vilified by American citizens near the camps as scum that Hitler should have exterminated in his camps.

FAMILY LEFTOVERS. (2003-plus)

Anybody who has survived the ordeal of cancer, as I had in 1997, should thank the eternal God that he or she can still observe the sun rise and set every day and enjoy the hours of work and leisure that we were put on this Earth for.

Tragically, speaking of my own family, my precious sister Annemarie had succumbed to cancer of the bone in 1964, aged fifty-one; my cousin Ursula Fraenkel died of lung cancer in Hamburg in 1991, even though she had never smoked a cigarette in her life and lived in the healthiest, unpolluted climate most of her life in the wooded Volksdorf suburb outside Hamburg.

Much as I will always mourn their absence (especially my sister's), I am glad that my two other surviving and healthy cousins (all three of us were born in the 1920s), Ilse Jochimsen of Klein Hansdorf near Hamburg and Jochen Fraenkel of Bolzano (Bozen) in Italy, are still frequently in touch with me by mail or phone. Ilse is a retired terminal-cancer nurse, Jochen still writes reports on economics. In fact, I have always been blessed by my close relationship to the members of my mother's family. None of the members of my father's family are still alive, which makes my son Stephen the last survivor of my Kuttner clan.

What still enrages me to this day, around sixty years after the Nazis' foul deeds of the Holocaust, of course is the murder of my beloved parents who had always been loyal German citizens and whose family tree dates back to the 1770s in Germany, yet who were sadistically put to death by the Hitlerites in concentration camps, even though my mother had served as a German nurse in World War I and my father had won the Iron Cross First Class already late in 1914 and later was promoted to the rank of

Oberstabsarzt, the medical chief of a German army division in Belgium, where in 1917 he ended the war as a POW.

Soon after World War I came to a close, a comrade-in-arms and former patient of his in the army, Erich Pommer, who became one of the top guns at UFA movie studios near Berlin, appointed him to become the medical doctor-in-residence there in Neubabelsberg, and here I often spent my summer vacations with him, but I was also introduced to a few of his medical colleagues, particularly to Professor Ferdinand Sauerbruch, who almost as soon as Hitler came to power embraced the Nazi philosophy and became the Führer's personal physician, seeing to it at least that my father still remain on the medical staff at Berlin's Charité and the Virchow Hospital until, in 1936, my father suffered a completely disabling stroke. Of course, none of his achievements or misfortunes made the slightest bit of difference to the Nazis. Even though they did not send my father later to the gas chambers of Auschwitz - as they did in the case of my mother in 1944 - they incarcerated him in the Theresienstadt "model ghetto" 28 miles from Prague - a concentration-camp "showpiece" for the foreign press, although these newspapermen were never informed that this site mostly served as a transit camp to certain extermination in Poland. In fact, the Nazis even produced a documentary during the war for German home consumption, showing Jewish Theresienstadt inmates enjoying sumptuous meals, reading books and magazines in a fully stocked library and attending variety shows and concerts while the "poor" German soldiers were fighting "for them" on the Eastern front. None of the filmed participants survived the war.

Professor Sauerbruch, whom I distinctly remember wearing a Hitler moustache, turned against his Führer only quite late in the

war when realizing that Germany was losing World War II. Even so, in the mid-1930s he had already analyzed the Nazi dictator to my father as a crossbreed of genius and madman.

Another medical doctor of some renown that I was introduced to by my father was a skin specialist who had successfully treated me as a pre-teen when I kept bleeding on the lefthand side of my forehead, Dr. Theodor Morell. Like my father, he practiced medicine just a few minutes distance from him on the Kurfürstendamm; he happened to be a rather fat man wearing thick-lensed spectacles, and in 1937 he became Hitler's second private physician when he had succeeded in healing a rather stubborn skin ailment the dictator was suffering from, he told my ailing father in my presence.

In this connection, I recall my father's brother, a dentist practicing on Berlin's busy Nürnberger Strasse - Otto Kuttner - telling us that a colleague of his, Hugo Blaschke, later became Hitler's dentist and that Dr.Blaschke had advised Otto to escape as early in the Nazi period as possible. And Uncle Otto did escape. To Canton in China,with his family, and although somebody informed us that he had died there of cancer years later, we never heard from him again after his arrival in the Orient.

Yet the Nazis paid no heed to my father's patriotic sentiments or his military service in World War I; so in spite of the stroke he had suffered in 1936, they sent him during World War II to the Czech concentration camp, where he perished in 1942, Even over six-and-a-half decades later, I still remember trying to reteach him to type,with his unaffected left hand,simple German words on his old Underwood. Unfortunately,though, the stroke had affected his brain to such a degree that he could never again quite regain his former high mental faculties.

Moreover, he could walk only with the aid of a cane, dragging his lame right leg slowly forward with each step he took. How this poor invalid could survive the horrible cattle-car ride to Czechoslovakia from Berlin and then the beatings and restless nights in unheated places, the louse-infested blankets in that Nazi camp, until he perished for no reason in 1942 will always be a riddle to me. But then, my maternal grandmother, Marie Fraenkel, also had to undergo the same subhuman treatment in her eighties when she was transported from Hamburg to the same Nazi camp as did my mother when she was in her fifties and was sent in a freight wagon from Berlin to Auschwitz.

A sight that still haunts me to this day, even more so than the slurred speech caused by my father's stroke, was his right hand whose fingers remained curled calcified like the claws of a dead crab. This useless hand had the color of red Burgundy, was always ice-cold and could not be pried open to a straight more relaxed state.

Becoming aware of this horrible sight of slow decay each time I visited him in my early teens often brought tears of hate for the Nazis, of helplessness and frustration to my eyes, but also tears of fear, fear of the Gestapo, the constant harassment of Hitler's regime and its destruction of my father's livelihhod as a medical practitioner and family provider.

Like most of Hitler's murdered victims, he finally became a nameless martyr on the indifferent altar of history.

Not until October 1986 did I find the courage to return to Berlin and visit my divorced parents' homes. Although I was never granted permission by the tenant to enter the place where I had lived with my mother and sister at the former Kaiser Allee address, I was luckier when I rang the doorbell to my father's previous apartment at Kurfürsten-damm 72. A life-insurance company had meanwhile appropriated the

place, and the lady who opened the door to me proved to be a stunningly beautiful dark-haired woman in her mid-twenties.

When I explained to her that I had lived in what was now her office half a century earlier and I just wanted to take a nostalgic tour of the premises, she received my plea for entry to her domain with a frown of suspicion. She asked why it occurred to me only now to pay a visit to my old flat. It was at that juncture that I withdrew my American passport and presented it to her, explaining that I had left Nazi Germany in 1939 and was now a U.S. citizen, having returned just for a visit.

Within a second her attitude toward me changed, even though she still would not admit me to the premises. A soft smile softened her lovely features when she questioned me why I had left Germany. Only after I explained to her the reason for my emigration and what had happened to my parents did she, quite unexpectedly, seize my left hand and literally pull me into the old apartment.

There we stood for probably two or three minutes in the vestibule, when she peppered me with a number of questions regarding my family members, and when I told her about their final fate in the camps, she took me by the hand and guided me through the 8-room office, introducing me to her busy co-workers as a former tenant, which plainly did not impress or interest any of them; but at least one of my heartfelt wishes had been fulfilled: to see the structure, the old rooms of my father again, which had miraculously not been damaged by Allied air attacks. (For that matter, my mother's and grandmother's apartments and my uncle's house near Hamburg had also remained unaffected by the war.) As expected, the rooms left a deep emotional impression on me since even without my father's furniture I saw the ghost of his

loving presence in all the nooks and crannies of every room. But there they were: the two toilets and the kitchen with its old stove (on which I had,in the mid-thirties, playfully chipped away some of the enamel while fooling around with a toy hammer that I had been given in conjunction with a fretsaw for one of my birthdays, and that black spot on the stove devoid of the enamel immediately filled my mind with a host of happy memories of my stepmother Ida,my father and me), and then there was the bathtub in which I had taken many a shower as a child when staying with them on weekends over half a century earlier.

However, still another unrelated member of my family exists, whom I dearly love to this day: my brother-in-law, Joe Klimmeck, about whom I wrote earlier. He turned out to be a wonderful husband to Annemie until she drew her final breath, and about two years after Annemie's death he married her good friend Ursula (Uschi) Dosmar and later moved with her into a beautiful San Rafael,California house since IBM had transferred him to closeby San Francisco. Tragically, in 1980, Uschi also died of cancer, making Joe again a widower, this time at the age of 58. Eleven years earlier, in 1969, my son Stephen, aged five, had lived with Joe and Uschi for a whole year and I visited all three of them for a couple of weeks that summer in San Rafael and could see with my own eyes how happy and carefree Stephen was with them, with his Kindergarten classmates, who were frequently invited to play on the swing I had bought him for the garden in the back of the Klimmecks' house. At all times Joe had proven to be a decent,kind-hearted and intelligent human being, right to the present, although, sadly, he does suffer from diabetes in his early eighties. And yet, he still enjoys a part-time job, helping people as old as himself. A real Mensch!

My saddest memories, not unexpectedly, will always center on those who breathed life into me: my parents. Even though they were divorced when I was three years old, I found limitless love in both their Berlin homes, but it is little solace to me today to realize that at least my sick father was not evicted by the Nazis from his beautiful apartment on Kurfürstendamm 72, something that can be traced to the fact that his second wife, Ida, was known to be an "Aryan" (though a great Hitler-hater) and their apartment's ownership transferred to her - - but when I say: not evicted, I mean not evicted until the Nazis simply arrested my father in December 1942 and deported him to a Czech concertration camp, where he perished soon.

My mother and sister were not so "fortunate." About seven months after I had emigrated to England in February 1939, they were ordered to vacate their beautiful 5-room apartment on Berlin's Kaiser Allee 26 since Jews and non-Aryans could not be entrusted by the Nazis to own their own flat. Of course, they received no compensation whatsoever for the loss of their belongings. At the end of 1939, they were forced to move to a furnished room in the nearby Holsteinische Strasse and a little while later to another furnished room at Uhland Strasse 114/115. Here my mother's last photos with Annemarie were taken shortly before my sister went underground and my mother was shipped to the Nazi death camp of Auschwitz-Birkenau on February 23, 1943. Weeks later their apartment building was destroyed by Allied bombs.

This was confirmed to me after the war by their Aryan friend, the German pianist Helmut Roloff, who had also spent some time during the war in a concentration camp for his anti-Nazi activities and volunteered later to hide a couple of my mother's suitcases, her last belongings, in his parents' apartment at the nearby Trautenau Strasse.

Naturally, the Nazis made short shrift of my mother's mother, Marie Fraenkel, a woman in her eighties and living in Hamburg. Like my father, she was also deported to Theresienstadt and, in short order, lost her life there as well, in 1943.

Nevertheless, when I mentioned the survival of my "half-Aryan" cousins at the beginning of this chapter, it must also be pointed out that Hitler meant to exterminate most of these half-Jews once he felt convinced he had won the war and was no longer in any need of their labor or military service, as Bryan Mark Rigg documents in his book "Hitler's Jewish Soldiers."

In this connection, a few other facts and figures are in order: A total of 60,000 German half-Jews and 90,000 quarter-Jews actually did serve in the Nazi armed services. Among them, the most notorious half-Jew was the rabidly anti-Semitic Nazi fanatic, Luftwaffe Air Marshal Erhard Milch, who was admired even by Adolf Hitler and in post-World War II years became one of the directors of Lufthansa.

In fact, Hitler had already discharged most half-Jews from the armed services after conquering France in 1940, including about two dozen half-Aryan generals.

And from his published table conversations, the Führer even called Jesus a half-Jew, claiming he had been fathered by a Galilean non-Jew, although it remained unmentioned that 2000 years later Hitler would have deported Christ's parents and grandparents to concentration camps as well.

Of course, the Germans, Austrians and other Europeans knew about the deportations of their fellow-Jews because they witnessed those mass arrests with their own eyes, but virtually none of these co-citizens (nor the Jews themselves) were aware at the time what ultimate fate was waiting for those arrested and sent to the camps, and when, in some cases, rumors of the death camps finally managed to trickle through

to these citizens, they did not choose to believe such outlandish news (what could they do at that juncture, anyway?), thinking instead that these unfortunate victims had been selected only to serve in Fritz Todt's semi-military organization, building roads and military installations for the Nazis.

MADDENING STATISTICS AND OTHER ODD FACTS. (2003)

Somehow I still fail to understand why the relatives of some political victims should be recompensed for the wrongs done to their families while the relatives of murdered victims of other political persecutions end up with nothing. As in my case.

For instance, the 2001 Hungarian Constitutional Court decided to donate to the heirs of Hungarian Jews who had died in the Holocaust the equivalent of one hundred dollars per Nazi concentration camp victim while the descendants of those Hungarian family members (mostly non-Jews) executed during the Communist era would receive around $3,300 per victim - - thirty-three times as much.

Okay, you say, what else is new? Just take a look at the beginning of this millenium when thousands of unpersecuted Latin Americans still enter the United States illegally each month by foot and in cargo containers, (four million illegal Mexicans live here), whereas fifty thousand truly desperate refugees from Nazi Germany were refused entry to the U.S. every single year (Most of them were exterminated by the Nazis.) throughout the 1930s. For example, The New York Times told its readers on February 16, 2001 that Mexican Foreign Ministry officials want even more Mexicans to be permitted entry into the U.S. Although none of these immigrants are being persecuted in Mexico as the Jews were in Nazi Germany, and although these people from Middle and South America refuse to practice birth control (which is their right, of course) and often arrive here illegally with as many as half a dozen children in tow, the U.S. taxpayer must immediately pick up their tab.

Even at the beginning of the 21st century, there are at least 8.7 million illegals in this country, according to the 2000 Census. In fact, The New York Times points out in a Washington, DC January 22, 2002 report that of the annual illegal influx between 1990 and 2000 into the U.S. exactly 61.5 percent proved to be Hispanics bet-

ween the ages of 18 and 29 alone.

Equally galling to those who were persecuted at one time is the fact that in the 1930s the U.S. corporate giant IBM let its German Nazi subsidiary Dehomag use its own Hollerith tabulating machines for data processing in order to register the most minute details about the Jews, their addresses and jobs in Germany, Austria and Holland.

Moreover, IBM's American head at the time, Thomas Watson, knew fully well from his visit to Nazi Germany that this information was required by the Nazis to arrest these Jewish nationals at a later date and send them to their death. Yet with the full knowledge of the tragic consequences for these victims, Watson continued to send the new Hollerith punchcards through neutral countries to Germany even during World War II and then went so far as to train Nazi personnel in the Third Reich in operating these machines in order to have the Nazi victims tabulated for deportation. Yet Thomas Watson was never called to task for this deliberately heinous decision of his, nor was the German IBM staff and their Nazi boss Willi Heidinger ever denazified or brought to justice by Allied authorities after the war for their complicity in the transportation of these European victims to the death camps. In fact, Heidinger was proud to boast later that he had had all this IBM data for use in his Führer's "corrective intervention."

Although the German IBM subsidiary with its technology helped to assist the Nazi-death-camp machinery during World War II, there is no abolute proof that Auschwitz had been one of those camps. But IBM's German subsidiary did provide the names and addresses of the Jewish death candidates to the Nazis with their detailed and confidential Hollerith punch-card and card-sorting systems, proof of their willful and voluntary involvement in the Nazi massmurder during World War II.

Without any doubt in my mind, this means that my own family's names had also been mentioned on the IBM lists of people to be annihilated. All these statistics were fully documented on NBC's "Dateline" program on February 18, 2001, which also included a photo of IBM's top honcho Thomas Watson going out of his way to visit Hitler.

Equally important, Crown published a superb book about this very subject, written by Edwin Black: "IBM and the Holocaust: The Strategic Alliance between Nazi Germany and America's Most Powerful Corporation."

Even so, IBM was cleared of virtually every charge of collaboration with the Nazis after the war. As a matter of fact, Kodak continued to work in Hitler's Germany as well during World War II.

Certainly much more galling is the fact that German and Austrian Nazi judges who had sentenced countless innocent citizens to death camps were reinstalled as judges in West Germany shortly after the end of the war and these continued to sentence, even then, some of the accused they knew to be anti-Nazis to long prison terms. Virtually none of them ever ended up like the Nazi judge portrayed by Burt Lancaster in "Judgement at Nuremberg," although they were all equally guilty of committing crimes of injustice under the Nazis.

Now compare this calamity with 21st century America, as statistically proven by Americans for Immigration Control, Inc. in Merrifield, VA.

Besides the millions of illegals living in the U.S., services to them now cost the U.S. taxpayer 29 billion dollars per year. Even the use of English as America's primary official language is under assault, with everything from drivers' licenses, voting ballots and new-citizen naturalization ceremonies being conducted lately in a dozen foreign languages (the only country in the world to do so).

Almost half a million foreigners now collect Social Security benefits from the Social Security Administration without having had to work one single day in the U.S. - - all this while 35% of burglaries and 34% of auto thefts are now committed by illegal aliens.

Moreover, the United States Border Control reported in August 2002 that 300,000 illegals have been ordered to be deported, yet they remain in the United States because the INS has not enforced their deportation order, being unable, in many cases, to locate them.

It is no longer a secret that in the twenty-first century more and more pregnant women sneak across the Mexican border into the U.S., so their babies will be legal American citizens and help to open the door to their large Latin families. Meanwhile elderly non-functional relatives of these illicit immigrants are also smuggled into the U.S. to take advantage of this country's Social Security and other systems, literally using America as a free DeLuxe retirement home for these unlawful migrants.

In retrospect, sixty-five to seventy years after my family's futile attempt to save its life by escaping from certain death in Nazi Germany, then by being denied entry into the U.S. (German illegals were non-existent),it still curdles the mind to contemplate how God and Washington could have allowed this injustice to be perpetrated on us while today's illegals come here literally by the millions from the South and from Canada, especially when hardly any of them have ever been persecuted politically in their own native countries for a single day in their lives as we had been.

Although many of the illegals today are anti-American saboteurs being returned to the place of their birth, the vast

majority of them have settled here unlawfully for good. Washington dismisses all of this with little more than a shrug of indifference....and a few deportations that are widely reported in the mass media.

No wonder, this lawful and law-abiding immigrant is burning up with anger over this brazen act of injustice! As well as over the continuing injustice of the State Department of Education in California, for example, that is funding the activities of Gateway Academy charter schools, whose superintendent is an officer of Muslims of the Americas (MOA). This tax-supported organization is an openly virulent anti-Jewish

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Islamic extremist group, which has this to say on its website about Jews: "Jews are an example of human Satans." Next, Zionism is described by these Muslim hatemongers as "heinous, barbaric and purely subhuman." Hitler would have loved the MOA.However...

Christians do not fare any better on this MOA website when it announces that Christians "believe in the supremacy and power of Satan," and it continues "that simple folks believe in Jesus as the Son of God whereas Jesus Himself never proclaimed to be such." Next, Muslims of the Americas comes up with a to-me unknown discovery that "priests are accepted as gods who have the power to send people to heaven" and then continues that such Christians "have blasphemed against the Wisdom and Judgment of God Almighty but reduced Him to a role of subservience to Satan."

And on October 13, 2001 MOA proclaimed in an E-mail about the U.S. that "the Constitution and the Bill of Rights are just **pieces of paper** that don't mean a damn thing anymore" while these very same Muslims claim to know for a fact, according to that E-mail, that the Ku Klux Klan is "sitting in the Oval Office and walking the halls of Congress."

This vile/anti-American (home-grown) propaganda is nothing new but should rejoice all bigots. And how come that the "KKK" in the Oval Office and Congress has not harmed any of these racists? Because,simply put,it's all a matter of the U.S. granting the weak and the hate-groups the freedom of letting off steam instead of bottling it up for a later explosion.

Yet,at the same time,I feel,the world must learn to realize why a multitude of Muslims,worldwide, feels so frustrated and powerless today when at one time they had been the dominant faith on Earth, and now as their last way out their only power on this

planet is merely to retaliate murderously in utter defeat and despair with their own small lethal Fundamentalist battalions. Yet the U.S. hardly reacts as long as it needs oil from Muslim countries.

But why even go that far afield spiritually with anti-Semitism when we can testify to our own hatred of the Jews directly here in the U.S.- Baptist camp as witnessed on the 1972 White House tape while Richard M. Nixon was president. On that occasion the evangelist Billy Graham was visiting President Nixon in the Oval Office and can be heard to complain bitterly about the Jewish stranglehold on the mass madia (without giving any example of those Jews presenting the news unfairly) and that he hoped it would be broken soon since the country was "going down the drain."

President Nixon immediately agreed with Rev.Graham, although it happened to be Nixon who did not blame all Jews but, as we know, he finally "went down the drain" himself as president, anyway.

On the other hand, Billy Graham protested decades later that his passage was taken out of context. He was never able to explain, however, how his anti-Semitic observation could have been misconstrued by listeners of that tape. Yet at the same time he did apologize for his statement on March 2, 2002.

Of course, many leading statesmen today also bask in the luxury of anti-Semitism, even though they may not always express themselves in this loathsome fashion in public. Take, for example, Daniel Bernard, the French Ambassador to St.James Court, who addressed a non-governmental crowd in the new millennium and referred to Israel a total of five times as "that shitty little country," a remark that was simply dismissed later by the French Embassy in London as nothing more than a remark "at a private dinner with friends." A good thing for the French Jews, Mons. Bernard did not occupy a governmental seat in Paris during the period of the Holocaust.

And a good thing, also, that it was brought to Washington's attention not to honor the German medical scientist Hubertus Stuckhold for his achievements after the war by naming a university building in 1990 after him in the United States when it was discovered that Professor Stuckhold, like five percent of all German doctors during the war, had performed deliberately/bestial medical experiments (some of them filmed and shown on American TV in the 2002 series "Science and the Swastika") on people he knew to be Jewish concentration camp prisoners from Dachau in 1941, ending in their agonizing death.

At least that German war criminal has been denied undeserved honors in the United States. Yet it is sad to contemplate that since the 1970s the permanent legal and illegal immigrant population to the United States has grown 650% faster than the native-born population of legal citizens, according to the 2000 U.S. census and the Washington-based Americans for Immigration Control, Inc. in 2002.

In retrospect, however, any sane citizen must also wonder whether the formation of a Jewish state half a world away after World War II has really succeeded in giving a measure of peace and security to the Jews of the world. Certainly not according to the world's media.

Even though the Palestinians today rightfully want to have their own country, it is strange that none of them ever displayed the slightest bit of interest in achieving that kind of self-determination while living in Hashemite Jordan, where they have always been disenfranchised. And yet, they form a majority in that country.

Again, to cite a few more statistics: Of the 800,000 Arab Muslims in the former Palestine, 472,000 fled immediately after Israel's birth in 1948 to Arab countries, where they were put into shanty-town camps and are still rotting away there to this very day. Yet of the approximately

325,000 Muslims left behind in modern Israel, their population has meanwhile increased to over one million citizens in the Jewish state. And here these Muslims have more rights today, including the right to vote, than any other Muslim population in the Middle East, where virtually no Arab citizen can vote.

But even stranger still: whereas next-to none of the Palestinians today in the West Bank and Gaza have ever lived in Israel , these people suddenly became obsessed by a "right of return" to Israel and by their demand of expelling the Jews from Israel.

Yet the survivors of the 472,000 original Arabs,who voluntarily left Israel in 1948, live today in 59 wretched Arab refugee camps and have meanwhile grown in number to about five million "refugees" since the Arab countries have steadfastly refused to integrate them into their own national societies as, for instance, the West Germans did with the fleeing East Germans after World War II.

What would happen if these five million people suddenly arrived in Israel, although over ninety percent of them had never lived there before? In one fell swoop, the newly cultivated Jewish democratic state of Israel would be turned overnight into an Arab Muslim state that has sworn to expel the native-born Israelis and will forever be hostile to the Christian West. All this in a Muslim Middle East,in which,for decades,the anti-Semitic forgery of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" and Hitler's"Mein Kampf" have been Arabic best-sellers. But then, what can one expect from such Nazi worshippers when one of their respected leaders, the Mufti of Jerusalem and spiritual leader of the Palestinian Arabs,in the Al Aksa mosque on July 11, 1997 preached: "Oh Allah, destroy America, for she is ruled by Zionist Jews!"?Which may come as a surprise to Washington.

But Washington is not surprised that more than half a billion dollars allotted each year by the Saudis and Saddam Hussein to alleviate the suffering of the Palestinian people everywhere goes instead to the activities sponsored by terrorist organizations such as Al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades.

In this connection, how ironical it also is today to remember the brave Danish people saving their Jews during World War II, when, in the 21st century, some of the Dabish media advertized to donate a $30,000 reward to anybody killing a prominent Jew in Denmark while, simultaneously, the General Workers Union of Denmark called for a boycott of all Israeli products but not for the boycott of imports of other "repressive" regimes.

And isn't it strange, again, that of all the "repressive" regimes in the world today only Israel was singled out during the United Nations-sponsored World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance at the beginning of the twenty-first century?

Equally ironical is the situation in Germany today when one considers that, since the 1990s, the Jewish population there has increased from 30,000 to well over 100,000 due to the influx of Russian Jews settling there rather than in Israel. Even so, this figure amounts today to half a million fewer Jews inside Germany than in 1933 when Hitler came to power.

Still, in this matter the cradle of democracy, Greece, is no slouch either when it comes to Jew-baiting. For instance, the prominent Greek daily newspaper "Ethnos" printed an April 2002 cartoon of two Israelis killing some unarmed Palestinians and bragging that they themselves had not suffered in Auschwitz but stayed there for the sole purpose of learning from the murderous Nazis. Mearwnile three other Greek dailies printed a Palestinian story (without a

rebuttal or offering any evidence) that Israelis were trafficking the organs of murdered Palestinians.

No wonder, the European Union comtinues to send grant after grant to the Palestinian Authority,even to its TV station, which continues to encourage suicide bombers and the furtherance of children's programs extolling the virtues of Muslim martyrs everywhere, specifically the deeds of Osama bin Laden.

Or as the brilliant "New York Times" columnist Tom Friedman so aptly put it in a September 2002 broadcast with Don Imus regarding the Muslims' relationship to Western civilization: "They want to destroy us for who we are, not for what we do."

In the meantime another struggle of ours continues at home: millions of illegal immigrants have been permitted to become U.S. citizens without having to learn English after living here for years. (In one Texan town only Spanish is spoken.) Today 35 million citizens of Spanish descent live in the U.S.A., just about as many as African-Americans. Well over half of these Hispanics are Mexicans, most of them good and honest workers, although 5,000 of them still cross the border illegally into the United States every single day.

Social forecasters, moreover, predict that by the year 2060 about one hundred million more immigrants, especially Latinos, will arrive in the United States. Yet many new legal aliens today demand that their children be taught all lessons in U.S. public schools in their own native tongue, such as Russian, Spanish, Cantonese, Farsai or Vietnamese instead of in English.

In fact, "U.S. English" Magazine reported in 2002 that more than 17 different languages are officially recognized as part

of America's bilingual education policy in the twenty-first century.

Pride in one's native tongue is laudable, but not if it is taught in this country now at the expense of the language in which the Declaration of Indepemdence and the U.S. Constitution is written. After all, in order to take advantage of all the benefits and rights guaranteed to its inhabitants under the English-language Constitution, the immigrants - legal and illegal - have struggled to come to these United States.

And, in any case, what is so abhorrent about learning the English language in the minimum of five years prior to becoming a U.S. citizen?

Being an immigrant U.S. citizen myself, this at least is my heartfelt opinion.

NEW MINI-HITLERS. (2003-plus)

There were Hitlers before Hitler and there are and will be Hitlers after Hitler.

Pope Pius XII, for all his World War II seeming indifference to the fate of Europe's Jews or his anti-Semitic pronouncement well before Hitler came to power in 1933, must never be counted among the guilty perpetrators of the Holocaust, although people who influenced the Führer's hatred of Jews with their writings even before World War I can truly be said to share some of the blame for the Holocaust. They include the composer Richard Wagner, England's political philosopher Houston Stewart Chamberlain, and to a certain degree Germany's geopolitical author Karl Haushofer. The latter exerted some influence on the Nazi movement and actually justified the German and Japanese drives for world domination in his writings. When he was investigated by the Allies after the war as a possible Nazi war criminal, he and his wife committed suicide.

Paradoxically, their brave son Albrecht, who was married to a non-Aryan woman, had been executed by the Gestapo as a resistance fighter against the Hitler regime shortly before the end of World War II in Europe.

Moreover, Osama bin Laden has proven meanwhile that he also wanted to incinerate Jews and Christians alike in his attempts to destroy American property and lives and spread Mohammedism, although this mass-murderer's crazed disciples are much more globally dispersed than Hitler's followers ever were, having already succeeded in snuffing out thousands of innocent lives of dozens of nationalities and religious faiths on several continents. Yet they are constantly threatening to use poison gas and bacteriological weapons in the name of their private Allah, hoping to sit next to him for eternity.

But "holy" Iraqi Muslims like Saddam Hussein were no slouches either when they publicly announced "May God damn the Jews!" and then he killed thousands of his own Kurds in 1991. Not to be outdone, Yasser Arafat has also constantly encouraged his Palestinians to "throw out the Jews into the sea," and he has never changed his opinion on this.

Yet again, only one third of one percent of the world's population actually is Jewish (about 16-18 million of a total world population of well over six billion people) and hardly any of them, except for those in the tiny Jewish state of Israel, today are in any position of governmental or military power.

Hitler and his hordes may be dead in the twenty-first century, but most Middle Eastern Arabs and Muslims would like nothing better than to continue his policy of mass-slaughtering the Jews of the world. That much they publicly admit in the Arab press day after day, decade after decade, although it must also be admitted that Israel, the only democratic country in the Mideast, has frequently blundered in confronting its internal security policies by failing to protect all of its citizens equally and giving the Israeli Arabs a good economic chance.

Yet Arafat's Palestinian Authority and other Muslim Fundamentalist terror organizations with their suicide and homicide bombers still publicize their dream daily in Arabic of destroying Israel and its Jews, although Arafat never reveals these true aspirations of his directly to the Western media. Naturally, the Muslim mass media, especially the Arab League's Zayed Center for Coordination and Follow-up symposium in Abu Dhabi on August 28, 2002 proclaimed that there never was a Holocaust, and not to be outdone, Hamas, Islamic Jihad and Hizballah joyfully pick up on this Jew-hating, anti-Israeli diatribe and disseminate it into the four corners of the Muslim world, including the wish to eventually exterminate both Jews and Christians. After all, both of these faithful believers in God are considered "Infidels" by most Muslims everywhere. Is that why Marx re-

ferred to religion as the "opium of the masses"? To me such destructive belief (not the real Islam!) resembles more the "opium of the asses."

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Just look at the Egyptian government-sponsored newspaper "Al-Akhbar" on April 18, 2001: "Thanks to Hitler, of blessed memory, who, on behalf of the Palestinians, revenged in advance against the most vile criminals on the face of the earth...his revenge on them (the Jews) was not enough."

Or read what "Tishreen," Syria's government newspaper had to say on January 31,2000: "Zionists created the Holocaust myth to blackmail and terrorize the world's intellectuals and politicians." Really? Which Western, Far Eastern or Australian intellectuals have been terrorized by Israel's Jews? Or hear what "The Tehran Times," the Iranian official government newspaper,told its readers on February 19, 2001: "Professional survivors such as Elie Wiesel, who present themselves as witnesses to the Holocaust, are in fact living proof that the alleged extermination of the Jews did not take place."

No kiddin'! Because there happen to be survivors of a genocide, it is the Iranians' contention today that consequently the genocide never took place! In their eyes,therefore,the historical proof that millions of GI's and Tommies returned safely from World War I and II battlefields means that WWI and WWII never took place!

And certainly Syrian literature does not want to be outdone when it comes to hating the world's Jews. The 1983 book "The Matzoh Zion," written by Syria's defense minister Mustafa Tlass, who claims in his opus that Jews drink the blood of their Christian and Muslim murder victims,has been made into a Middle Eastern movie. Naturally he also denies the Holocaust. But then Syria's president himself, Assad, uttered vile anti-Jewish even lies in the presence of visiting Pope John Paul II in the new millennium ,that it was only the Jews who killed Christ and that they also tried to kill the Prophet Mohammed.

On the other hand, not to be outdone, the columnist Anis Mansour wrote in the Egyptian newspaper "Al Ahram" that it has "become clear to the world that what happened to the Jews of Germany, Poland and Russia was justified." Really? Even babies and children and teenagers, like the forgiving Anne Frank, being slaughtered was justified?

Why don't these Jew-haters make up their minds? Half of them claim there was no Holocaust while the other half brags that the Jews did deserve Hitler's Holocaust.

Again in Syria, the Director-General of the Damascus-based Secretariat of the Red Cross, Dr. Abdul Ghani al-Ashi, wrote in a special 2000 edition of its publication "Al-Ghad" that, worldwide, "Jews are the promoters of drugs, prostitution, homosexuality and crimes."

But this Syrian position shouldn't really surprise anyone, if one considers that Syria's president, Bashar al-Assad, issued his 2001 Goebbels-like gospel, claiming that "Jews try to kill the principles of all religions," while a few weeks earlier he announced that Israel is "a racist society, even more racists than the Nazis." Perhaps Bashar al-Assad can explain to the world exactly where the Israelis are hiding their gas chambers or how the Muslims in Israel are being exterminated while their population in the Jewish state actually has multiplied several times since Israel had become independent in 1947. Or has Syria's president forgotten that in 1982 his father, Hafez al-Assad, had 20,000 defenseless Syrians killed in his own city of Hama?

But why go so far astray when closer to home, the Jew-hating Institute for Historical Review in California continues to spread its propaganda that "the Holocaust story is nothing but a gigantic fraud"? Not surprisingly, Switzerland's head of "Truth and Justice," Jürgen Graf, an avowed Jew-baiter, claims there never was a Holocaust either.

I wish these professional anti-Semites would produce my parents since, according to all those deniers, my family had never been murdered by the Nazis. Strange, though, why the Nazis would decide to put my parents' names on their own lists of those exterminated by them in 1943, resp. 1944.

And in Hitler's native country, Austria, the Führer's admirer Joerg Haider (Heil Haider!) in the 1990s got a kick out of his race-baiting political movement, the so-called Freedom Party. In a beerhall speech Haider asked about the leader of the Jewish community in Vienna, Ariel Muzicant, how so much dirt could stick to this Jew. Professors from the U.S.,Israel and several European countries then denounced Austrian government leaders in an open letter to Austrian President Thomas Klestil in Der Standard, criticizing them for the meekness of their response to Haider's attack on Jewish and other leaders. Fortunately, for an increasing lack of support, Haider and his party suffered a big defeat in September 2002. Nevertheless, a 2001 survey in the Austrian media indicated that almost half of all Austrians polled today remain opposed to the government's intention to continue compensation and restitution payments to Austria's few remaining Holocaust survivors, but that instead they favored a big boost in the pension to their surviving SS death-squad executioners.

Anti-Semitism there, and especially in Poland, has always been prevalent in the last two hundred years. Just recently, in the year 2001, professional non-Jewish historians discovered that it was not the work of the occupying German forces in World War II but the Poles themselves who, on July 10, 1941, turned on their own Jewish villagers in Jedwabne, herded them into a barn and set it on fire with kerosene, killing 1,600 of them that day. A chiselled slab stone today serves as a monument, telling this grisly story, although this post-war memorial blames the Nazis for this monstrous

crime. The Polish-born American historian Jan Gross covers all of this in detail in his book "Neighbors."

There are no Jews in Jedwabne today, but some of the older Polish Catholic eyewitnesses of this massmurder were interviewed on the CBS TV broadcast "60 Minutes" on March 24, 2002, confirming that it was their own Polish neighbors who had committed this unspeakable bestiality. At the same time, younger villagers today refused to believe this accusation and the local priest there, Edward Orlowski, claimed that the testifiers were bribed to bear false witness. On the other hand, Poland's Josef Cardinal Gleb simply blamed the Jews for being massacred because some of them had cooperated with the Soviets during the Russian occupation of Poland. The Cardinal did not explain, however, why in that case the Poles had not also turned on their own Catholic Stalinist neighbors and killed them as well, but annihilated only the Jews, including hundreds of children. Former Polish President Lech Walesa put it equally bluntly on the CBS TV program. He claimed that Jews like Gross write such things only to enrich themselves, but like Cardinal Gleb he did not deny that this Polish Jedwabne massacre had indeed taken place. In retrospect one can only deduct that these murders were committed not because of what the Jews were doing to anybody but because of how the Polish Catholics had been raised to hate them.

Even Poland's President Aleksandr Kwasniewski admitted in mid-2001 that there are indeed these "black stains in our history, and we will no longer be able to ignore them."

Although quite a few Poles protected some of their Jewish neighbors from the Nazis, three-and-a-half million Polish Jews did perish in the Holocaust, including eight hundred of them being burned alive in another barn by their non-Jewish Polish neighbors in Radzilow on July 7, 1941.

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Moreover, on "60 Minutes" Father Edward Orlowski simply dismissed the massacre as a lie - - Holocaust business, not his business. Equally incriminating proved to be the fact that the Jedwabne excavation was stopped in 2001 after the remains of 200 of the slain Jews finally had been exhumed.

Not too far from this site of Polish mass murder stands the most famous (and infamous) of Nazi extermination camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau, where around one million inmates were killed by gas, torture, disease, famine, and by the totally senseless medical experiments performed for the most part on inmates by German doctors, such as Josef Mengele and Otmar von Verschuer, whose specialty it was to inject inmates for fun with tuberculosis germs. None of their "experiments," especially on twins, ever resulted in any medical discoveries.

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Of course, Germany as well as Austria and Poland did not stand alone in their attempt to stamp out their Jewish fellow-citizens. So did, and still do, the Syrians, Iranians, Iraqis and Egyptians, leaving only a few token indigenous Jews alive and well as a showpiece to prove to the world how much they "love" their Jews. One does not have to be an Osama bin Laden to dance in the blood of those innocent victims.

But these Muslim countries have actually succeeded in singling out Israel, of all the 190 member nations, depriving it alone for over half a century of its right to sit on the United Nations Security Council. Israel must feel like an ordinary driver having to pay the toll without there being a bridge. Quite frustrating!

Meanwhile the Muslim Middle Eastern countries deliberately keep the second- and third-generation Palestinian refugees in a state of squalor and despair, causing these people to do nothing but dream of bloody revenge on the Jews and procreate. So now we have about four to five million of them insisting on "returning" to Israel (Palestine) and converting the Jewish homeland over night into a Muslim country, in which these immigrants are determined to rid their new home of its Jews. Or as Sam Goldwyn once remarked to a depressed Billy Wilder: "In life you gotta take the bitter with the sour."

Nevertheless, the sad fact remains that each of the killers among the peaceful Muslims truly believes he will be rewarded in heaven for his murders with 72 Virgins. What remains unsaid in the Koran is that those assassins will also be rewarded with 72 mothers-in-law.

Still, if it were in God's power He'd return the conquered Arab territories immediately to the Arabs and let their refugees resettle there - and there alone - with Mideastern economic aid, then make the new land of Palestine a viable internationally supported country, and finally convert Jerusalem into a free religious enclave, for all faiths under the sole and complete control of at least twenty thousand armed U.N. troops.

All this, provided the entire Muslim world agrees to leave the tiny state of Israel alone and at long last has normal trade and diplomatic relations with it.

Naturally, if we continue to hear an Arafat pal, Ahmed Abd-al-Rahman al-Sudays, imam of the Mosque of Mecca, talking in the 21st century about the Jews of Israel: "The air hates you, the land hates you, the trees hate you - - there is no purpose in your staying on this land," then He might as well have signed his proclamation with a proud "Heil Hitler!" and cultivate Arab soil, as he no doubt would love to, with the blood and smashed bones of his Jewish murder victims, who he refers to as "pigs and monkeys."

Of course, the Palestinian Arabs are constantly being bombarded from infancy by their Goebbels-like hate-propaganda with such lies as that the chewing gum and candies being distributed to Arab children by Israelis are poisoned, that the Jews use the blood of Muslim and Christian children under the age of ten to bake their Passover and Purim pastries (per the Saudi government daily "Al Riyadh" in 2002), that the Jews introduced foot-and-mouth disease to the Middle East (forgetting to mention that the Israelis' own cattle had been affected too), even that the Zionists had been allied with the German Nazis throughout World War II. (Where? In Belsen and Auschwitz?).

Like a child with an uncontrollable temper tantrum, a Saudi ministry official of Islamic Affairs, Matruk Al-Haddal, announced on Arab TV in 2002 that all Jews are "brothers of apes and pigs...They are all evil."

And all this mentally retarded propaganda, day and night, for no other reason than that well over half-a-century ago the Jews, following the Holocaust, had been assigned by the U.N. a country the size of less than half the area of San Bernardino county in California!

Instead of remaining in the newly founded Israeli state in 1948, many Muslims were tragically expelled, unjustly so, but 472,000 Palestinians immediately chose to flee to neighboring Arab countries, where these refugees have never been allowed to integrate into their host-country societies, but were put instead by these oil-rich Muslim neighbors of theirs into the most demeaning and unsanitary internment camps. Here they still fester today and have meanwhile increased in number to about five million, all of who suddenly claim they have the right to "return" to the country of their grandparents and repossess the land that has meanwhile been cultivated by the Israelis for almost sixty years. On top of it, Arafat's Palestinian Authority and Arkaida demand that the Jews who had immigrated there or were born there after 1948 be expelled and make room for the Palestinians and their offspring who had deserted their land voluntarily in 1948 or later and that then the new country be called "Palestine" again.

It also seems strange that their billionaire oil-emirs fritter away hundreds of millions on their luxury palaces or invest their wealth in Western bond and stock markets, but that they have virtually no penny left to spare for those Muslims who had mistakenly fled Israel in the late 1940s and are now deliberately being kept in abject poverty and despair in those polluted Arab camps. And yet, instead of directing the bottomless hatred of these impoverished refugees at their own rich host governments, the second- and third-generation Palestinian refugees are being taught to hate the country from which their grandparents had voluntarily departed because they did not want to live in a country that also gave haven to Jews. Still, Jewish settlements on conquered

non-Israeli territory

are indefensible and will have to be abandoned in return for a just peace and economic cooperation in the Middle East.

In the meantime the hatred goes on and on! Hundreds of uniformed children give the Nazi salute during Hizbollah's "Jerusalem Day" 2002-celebrations in a photo taken by Reuters/Getty Images in Beirut while Iran increases its financial aid to Hamas from 1.3 million dollars to seven million per year and continues to recruit suicide bombers against Israel and the U.S.

At the same time, ex-KKK leader David Duke announces on his Internet website "The Real Evil Spirit" that the American "government is completely subordinated to a foreign power: Israel," which must come as a big surprise to all American governments since 1948. But even poor Benjamin Franklin is dragged into this ugly hate propaganda now when the Egyptian government weekly "Akher Sa'a" quotes a forged document (which the Franklin Institute in Philadelphia denied ever existed), in which Franklin purportedly wrote in 1789: "A great danger threatens the United States of America. The great danger is the Jews."

Of course, anti-Semitism is not only confined to the Arab Muslims and Mr. Duke today, but it is prevalent in some pockets of Western democracies as well.

Just take a look at this new millennium when, for example, 4,000 neo-Nazis are permitted to march deliberately through Berlin's historic Jewish quarter in December 2001, and the Jews in the German capital were them subjected to a Nazi demonstration on the Jewish Sabbath virtually im front of one of their synagogues. Even the English chief Rabbi reported in 2002 that Jews were suffering the worst kind of anti-Semitism in the U.K. since World War II.

Meanwhile French President Jacques Chirac on February 26, 2002 merely brushed off hundreds of anti-Semitic acts in his country as "hooliganism," claiming that "there is no upsurge in anti-Semitism and no anti-Semites in France."

Yet isn't it strange, in this case, that only French synagogues have been targeted with destruction and desecration but no churches and no mosques?

Meanwhile Great Britain's "New Statesman" has its reporter Dennis Sewell condemn England's Zionist lobby, claiming that its critics are harassed and muted and that "Big Jewry" can be compared to the dangers posed by Big Tobacco. Even a drawing accompanied the article, showing a gold Star of David piercing an obviously defenseless Union Jack.

At the same time, in 2002, Jean-Yves Douissard, a politician from Lorraine, shouted "Death to the Jews!" at a National Front neo-Nazi rally. This at a time when, by 2020, the world's Jewish population is estimated to shrink from about 16 million to 13 million, according to Hebrew University Professor Sergio Della Pergola: 13 million out of a total world population of ca. six-and-a-half billion people by 2020!

Even so, the 2001 U.N.-sponsored World Conference Against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance in Durban, South Africa became a festival of Anti-Americanism and anti-Semitic propaganda; here leaflets were distributed depicting Jews with fangs dripping blood and wearing helmets inscribed with Nazi swastikas. Moreover, only one nation was singled out for criticism in the governmental draft documents of that World Conference: Who else but the tiny state of Israel!

It should not come as a surprise, therefore, that with the U.N. General Assembly being dominated by sixty Arab and Muslim countries,

this particular voting bloc is assured to continue to condemn Israel as it has in the past in more than a thousand resolutions. Consequently, is it really so strange that not a single resolution has ever been able to pass specifically condemning even a single act

of Arab terror against the Jewish State?

But what actually did happen when the West Bank, Gaza and the old City of Jerusalem were under Arab control in the 1960s?

Jerusalem's synagogues were destroyed, the Jewish cemetery on Mount of Olives was desecrated, Jewish tombstones were used to construct urinals for Muslims, Jews were barred from praying at the Western (Wailing) Wall. And when, in the 1990s, Israel's Prime Minister Barak offered Arafat a Palestinian state on 95% of the West Bank, plus all of Gaza, plus the major Muslim areas of East Jerusalem, plus the holy sites of the Old City, Arafat immediately rejected the entire offer as not being good enough, which in turn caused an exasperated President Clinton to blame Arafat for the collapse of the negotiations.

Moreover, Barak even offered Arafat to dismantle virtually all the Jewish settlements on disputed old Palestinian territories, and again Arafat rejected this offer. Meanwhile the earnest Saudi Prince Abdullah talks peace and recognition of Israel while his Ambassador to London, Ghazial Gosaibi, simultaneously publishes his poem praising and encouraging the continuation of suicide bombers.

And if the Portuguese Nobel Laureate, José Saramago, compares tiny Israel's self-defensive measures as being in the "spirit of Auschwitz," perhaps he is the kind of person who can see no difference between Hitler's cattle cars deporting innocent millions to the gas chambers of Auschwitz and over a million Muslims multiplying and working for their livelihood in the State of Israel,which most Muslims have sworn to destroy.

But why go as far astray as the Middle East? Just take a look at our own backyard,at the backhanded threat being proposed by the rather belatedly penitent

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Reverend Billy Graham, whose voice can be heard on National Archives tapes telling President Nixon in 1972 that "if you get elected a second time, then we might be able to do something," referring to American Jews having their/pro-Israel voices stilled, and a little while later he refers to them again: "They (the Jews) don't know how I feel about what they're doing to this country." Yes, Reverend Graham, /tell us, exactly what are they doing to the U.S that you feel is destroying this country? We don't know, because Pres. Nixon exhorted the evangelist immediately: "You must not let them know."

Although, in all fairness, it must be pointed out that these two gentlemen certainly would not have gone/quite as far as attending the annual Hitler birthday bashes, sponsored (in 2002, for instance) by America's National Socialist Movement in Minneapolis, the Northern Hammerskins in Detroit, and the Aryan Nations in Potter County, PA.

All these shenanigans make just about as much politcal sense/today as Hitler's/favorite filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl claiming to her U.S. interrogator Irving Rosenbaum after the war that she was never a Nazi sympathizer, just a Führer admirer.

But in the final analysis things would perhaps greatly improve in this interracial world we/now live in, if Muslims and Jews would at long last get together in a true Christian spirit.

At the same time we must always remember and honor those few brave Christian souls who do and did sincerely lament the senseless slaughter of the Nazi victims, Jews and non-Jews alike.

This was brought home at the National Shrine of the Little Flower in Royal Oak, Michigan, the church where Father Charles

Coughlin delivered his anti-Semitic sermons in the 1930s. Here the Rev. Franklin H. Littell hosted an ecumenical service in 2001 for the victims of the Holocaust and announced that "the Holocaust was committed by baptized Christians in the heart of Christian Europe."

That same year, even Poland's President Aleksandr Kwasniewski asked for forgiveness for the killing of 1600 Jews in the Polish village of Jedwabne, not victims of German Nazi soldiers but of ordinary Polish citizens. On the other hand, sixty years after that voluntary mass slaughter, most villagers of Jedwabne boycotted the ceremony. The Roman Catholic church also declined to be represented as did the local parish priest, Edward Orlowski, ~~announced that it was all a lie -- Holocaust business, not his business. Moreover, excavations of the site of the massacre were stopped in 2001 after the remains of 200 of the slain Jews finally had been exhumed. Not too far from this site of Polish mass murder stands the most infamous (and famous) of Nazi extermination camps, Auschwitz-Birkenau, where around one million inmates were killed by gas, torture, disease, famine and by the totally senseless medical experiments performed for the most part on inmates by German doctors, such as Josef Mengele and Otmar von Verschuer, whose specialty it was to inject inmates for fun with tuberculosis~~

Of course, each country has and had its share of professional Jew haters. In England, for instance, there were Sir Oswald Mosley and the American-born poets T.S.Eliot and Ezra Pound, the latter preferring to stay in Fascist Italy during the war and make anti-Allied broadcasts there from 1940-45.

Things certainly haven't improved much when it comes to some of the celebrities in England sixty years later and one considers

that, in 2002, Britain's Home Office minister,Under Secretary Angela Eagle, speaking for the British government, cannot imagine Holocaust denial to be an offense. Even more galling, England's BBC art critic, Tom Paulin, was quoted announcing the same year in Egypt's official government press that all Brooklyn-born settlers in Israel should be shot dead.

None of this,of course, can be compared for sheer evil to the geneticist program of Hitler's September 1,1939 command to his medical doctor, Karl Brandt, who was also the "Reichskommissar" for Health, to exterminate all Germans,including children, showing the slightest genetic birth defect. That would have endangered the Führer's dream of creating a new world-dominant master race. Such "medical" madness was carried out in German labs and sanatoria as a precursor to the Holocaust and code-named "t 4" for Hitler's chancellery address at Tiergartenstrasse 4, but such drastic measures,of course, had sometimes been contemplated in other countries, too. In August 1941 this particular action came to a halt when news of it leaked out and Hitler was personally attacked from the pulpit by the Catholic Bishop of Münster, Clemens von Gahlen,about this mass murder of over 100,000 sick victims. Hitler,naturally,became enraged by this act of public critcism of him and promised to take care of the bishop after the war.

Naturally,such disturbing news items did not have the slightest effect on America's foremost anti-Semite, the industrial genius Henry Ford. In fact, Ford's enormous wealth had helped to support the

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Jew-hating "Dearborn Independent" already early in the twentieth century and he also turned out to be the only American mentioned (favorably) in Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" for his virulent anti-Semitism. Hitler actually used Ford's German factory in World War II, employing thousands of slave laborers in that plant, and when Ford saw newsreels of the Nazi concentration camps in 1946, he stormed furiously out of his private theater, suffered a stroke and died the following year.

One can only wish that a similar fate would befall the Palestinian Authority's Mufti Sheikh Ikrimeh Sabri when, in 2001, he preached at the Al-Aqsa Mosque that Allah destroy Israel, the world's Jews, Great Britain and America. People may be permitted to wonder what the Prophet Mohammed (1400 years ago) would have to say about such religion-oriented bloodthirsty pronouncement.

Or how Christ would feel about the World Church of the Creator's leader Matt Hale when he proclaimed after the World Trade Center tragedy that "we have to channel this hatred toward the Jews," while Edgar Steele, the lawyer who defended the Aryan Nations, said after the September 11, 2001 attacks that this tragedy happened "because America is now Jewish owned, led and managed." All of which will be news to Washington and Wall Street. In the meantime the head of the White Aryan Resistance's ally, Tina Higgins, said that such tragedies can only be due to America's support of "that bastard state Israel." And William Pierce, the head of the neo-Nazi organization in the U.S., National Alliance, insists he has proof that the disaster was due to "the American people permitting the Jews to control their government." The question to each of these statements remains: Which Jews? Why don't these accusers print a list of these Jews' names and then publish documented proof how they actually are responsible for the American

tragedies in New York and Washington, D.C. and all of the world's economic ills and hardships? Hasn't it ever occurred to them that even if all the 16-18 million Jews of the world were killed in one fell swoop, the six billion remaining people on this globe of ours would be in exactly the same kind of situation in which they find themselves today and twenty years from now?

Hasn't the world realized yet that these kamikaze-Muslims do not only want the vilification and the eventual destruction of Israel and then the world's Jewish and Christian people, "the Infidels," but also the immediate abandonment of all democratic ideals ~~(as such a policy is now prevalent in Muslim-run countries)~~ and of this planet's Judaeo-Christian way of life?

It's not Islam that is at fault or the threat today, but the fanatic dictators and followers of a blind Fundamentalist Islam, who have converted their benevolent religious tenets and twisted them to their own tyrannical beliefs and agenda at a time when their Muslim-dominated governments can no longer solve the economic hopelessness and social upheavals of their own desperate people!

Yet even in the United States, young American Muslim students consider the Muslims, who destroyed the World Trade Center and Pentagon, martyrs worthy of sitting next to Allah, according to an interview with them on CBS's "60 Minutes" on April 30, 2002.

And still, thousands of illegal Muslim immigrants continue to flood the U.S. through the open U.S.-Canadian border, as "60 Minutes" pointed out in the same program, and that there is virtually no check-up on any of the potential terrorists among them, whose dream it is to convert America into a strict Muslim country that would tolerate no other faith but its own within its borders.

Naturally, when Israel's Likud Party and Benjamin Netanjahu continue to insist that the Palestinians must never be granted their own country, Palestine, then they are pouring oil on a desperate fire, which will eventually scorch and incinerate their own Jewish homeland from within, Arafat or no Arafat.

Equally, the question to be answered remains: Will the world of Islam continue to evolve either into an Osama-style belligerent deaf and blind Hitlerian group of aggressors or into a twenty-first century religious and political kind of normalized and cooperative faith with the other five billion people wanting to live peacefully on this tiny planet, bestowed on us by one God?

~~Of course, when the Arab media continue to spread the lie that the Jews, not the Muslims, destroyed the World Trade Center (although Osama bin Laden loved to take responsibility for this deed a little while later), because no Jews were reported to be among its victims, then one can only point to the fact that even today several hundred Jewish employees there are still among the missing, while many of the other Jewish and Christian workers there had, indeed, not arrived yet for work on the morning of nine-eleven.~~

Nevertheless, if Muslims like Dr. Ahmad Abu Halabiya meanwhile continue to preach hatred, as he did in the twenty-first century in the Zayed bin Sultan Nahyan mosque in Gaza: "Have no mercy on the Jews...Wherever you meet them, kill them..." then it is hard to imagine how there can ever be peace on earth, or why in that case there should be the establishment of a Palestinian homeland bent on a continuation of a war of total destruction.

Until peaceful Palestinians get their own country, the U.S. and Europe will have to be on a constant look-out to prevent threatening attacks from religious terrorists, especially against such targets

as the United States' electric-power grid and water supply systems and its 103 nuclear plants. The United States must also be more careful in checking its incoming seaborne cargo, of which only two per cent are ever inspected. And then there is the constant threat of being exposed to sudden acts of bioterrorism, such as attacks with smallpox, anthrax and other deadly agents that can spread quickly and cut a wide swath of complete devastation.

Yet in retrospect, it is amazing how close the real Hitler came to winning World War II with an atomic bomb, even though he believed he could bring England to its knees much faster with Wernher von Braun's long-range missiles rather than with Werner Heisenberg's attempt to build nuclear weapons.

For example, detailed correspondence discovered only in 2002 between the two scientific Nobel-prizewinning giants Niels Bohr of Denmark and Werner Heisenberg of Germany reveals that, contrary to the latter's postwar statements that he had tried to boycott Hitler's so-called order to make nuclear weapons, Heisenberg in fact attempted everything in his power, though unsuccessfully, to create an A-bomb for the Third Reich, because from early on he had been a great admirer and supporter of Hitler's Nazi policies. This was also substantiated by Heisenberg's two Jewish co-workers and students of the 1920s and early 1930s, Rudolf Peierls and Otto Frisch, who after their expulsion from the Nazi labs in 1933 wrote the 1940 University of Birmingham (England) memorandum that first implied the feasibility of using Uranium 235 to make an atomic bomb.

Naturally, one does not have to go back to the 1930s to discover traces of anti-Semitism among the giants of modern history, when even as celebrated a person as Archbishop Tutu of South Africa in the 1990s referred to Jews as Nazis, which may have gotten the ear of the late and puzzled Adolf Hitler.

But to my way of thinking this observation is not an ounce more outrageous than when all the recently elected New York governors signed a law that would permit illegal aliens to get a free education in New York State colleges while native-born out-of-state Americans cannot do so and must attend college in their own state.

Yet in the final analysis, what are these trifling matters compared to the new, the major 21st-century upheavals in store for the next generation! Because the mini-Hitlers of today and tomorrow have just one overriding goal in mind: To destroy, once and for all, the Judaeo-Christian religion and its way of life for all of its believers. This self-admitted blood-thirsty aim of theirs is rooted in what they consider to be the rock of their faith: to remove forever the "infidels" of the Western World, two billion of them, wherever they can be found.

This mass-slaughter alone, they sincerely believe, will earn them a seat next to their private God (in whose name so many crimes have been committed in the past by countless faiths) and purify Mother Earth this century for the universal glory of Mohammed.

Forget about the vast democratically infected Muslims in the Western world! Ten million of them on the European and American continents can easily be sacrificed, say some Mullahs, on the altar of Allah once the final battle of atomic and bacteriological weapons has been unleashed on the "infidels."

Forget about Osama and the Taliban. They were nothing but stepping stones to a monolithic Muslim world that no longer has the patience with or tolerance for any divine faith on Earth other than its own dictatorial creed.

Allah, where is your true loving Apostle today?

I cannot imagine that it is the leader of America's Nation of Islam. Because it certainly is no secret that one of the best-known people in the U.S. today attacking Jews whenever he gets a chance to on American TV is its leader, Louis Farrakhan.

Not only did he preach his doctrine of blaming Jews mostly for the tragic history of America's blacks, but he even referred to Hitler as "a very great man," which he later had to modify, after an enormous public outcry, to the Führer being "a wickedly great man." (Which is true.)

He also pointed out that the creation of the state of Israel was "an outlaw act," but he never criticized Nazi Germany or Hitler specifically for his territorial/outlaw conquests nor did he lament the result of the Holocaust, even though he knew that America's Jews had condemned and denounced slavery and black exploitation after the Civil War. As a matter of fact, less than one per cent of America's slaveholders were Jewish.

But it is doubtful that even a group like the Nation of Islam harbors the wish of destroying American democracy. Within a tolerant society, like ours, such a "final solution" is not necessary. Nevertheless, today the real enemy of a free people is not another enslaving nation state, like Nazi Germany or the Soviet Union used to be, but a faceless group of mass-murderers operating within its borders; in fact, a cut-throat group forming clandestinely their own borderless state within any given unsuspecting country, especially within a democracy, maybe thousands strong and hell-bent, like cancer, on the eventual and total destruction of its host country (read: USA). And again, such insidious religious fanatics are only too willing to sacrifice themselves in the execu-

tion of their self-appointed murderous missions, which by accomplishing this blood-bath of the "Infidels" will eventually assure them, they feel, of some specially reserved upholstered armchairs next to their private God.

This is how the Muslim fanatics of "nine-eleven" felt, that by annihilating Americans in their suicidal service to Allah they would be rewarded by him.

And then suddenly, after that dastardly September day had taken place, some Muslims contended that it was the Jews, not the followers of Mohammed, who had engineered those horrible acts.

Oh, really? Then how come that it has been documentarily established that most of the accused Muslim hijackers had all of a sudden started to take flying lessons for months prior to their foul deed but were not interested in learning how to land a plane? How come that only a few passengers on these planes were Jewish and it would have been next to impossible for them to have overcome the flight crews and dozens of Arab passengers?

How come that on all four flights that disastrous day there was suddenly this unusually large number of Muslims on each of these four planes, especially when none of them had spent a dime on a return ticket and had virtually no heavy luggage with them?

And why is it that TV film footage was shown in America and in Muslim countries on 9/11, displaying the sight of Muslims dancing with joy on the streets of New York and abroad while the Twin Towers were still standing and burning?

How come that within twenty-four hours of the disaster the Arab mass media already printed the incredible statement that all 4,000 Jews employed at the World Trade Center had stayed home on September 11th?

How did the Arabs arrive at the fact that it was that number of Jews - 4,000 - who were employed in those buildings? And who informed the Arabs that at 8:50 a.m. (well before the start of the workday) all the Jews employed there had already called in they would stay home on nine-eleven?

And if these Jews did not call their offices they'd stay home on 9/11, how could the Arab press 9,000 miles away prepare such a bulletin already on 9/12 when not even the American media and the U.S. government had had such information?

Yes, it is true that an anonymous e-message was received by some World Trade Center Jewish employees not to attend work on 9/11, but it has also been established meanwhile that at that early hour of September 11, at least four hundred of them - Americans, Israelis and Europeans - had already entered their offices and since then been registered, like the rest of those lost in New York, Pennsylvania and Washington,D.C., among the missing victims.

Moreover, people have often asked themselves: If these Arabs had not been involved in those acts of terror and destruction, why do their Muslim families as well as their governments and mullahs celebrate to this very day these hijackers as martyrs and consider their deed as an act of heroism worthy of sitting next to Allah?

Equally important, why would Osama bin Laden himself want to take credit and responsibility on the world's TV screens for this monstrous mass slaughter just a few days after the disaster and gloat over it?

On the other hand, is it at this stage really so difficult to understand why so many Christian Palestinians had decided, since the year 2000, to leave their homes for Europe and the United States, knowing they were in danger of being exterminated by their own Muslim countrymen?

Is it so surprising, therefore, that right here, on America's home-ground, in Oklahoma City, the Muslim Arab Youth Association (MAYA), as early as 1992 had openly called for death not only to the Jews but to all Americans everywhere?

Nevertheless, in all fairness it must also be emphasized that the majority of American Muslims never endorsed such acts of terror on American soil or against Americans anywhere for that matter. After all. it is not the Americans who are at war with Islam, but Islamic Fundamentalism that is at war with America.

At the same time, one must also point out how typical it is of a totalitarian mentality when a country like Communist China planned to open an Israeli exhibition in late 2002, dealing with the life and work of Albert Einstein, but that then Peking prohibited all references to the scientist - - named the greatest man of the twentieth century by TIME- - being a Jew and a supporter of Israel. It's almost like Israel insisting that a Chinese exhibition in Tel Aviv heralding the life of Mao would not be permitted to claim that Mao was a Chinese atheist and a Communist. (In any case, the Israelis cancelled the exhibit.)

But still, as CBS's "60 Minutes" on September 29,2002 demonstrated, it is not only Iran and Iraq,which are out to destroy Israel and its people, but the thousands of cartons of Arafat's personal anti-Israeli documents captured in 2002 by the Israelis at his Ramallah headquarters now prove beyond the shadow of a doubt that his Palestinian Authority had also been involved in virtually all anti-Western sabotage acts (including those of 9/11) and its intent to continue with these very same murderous missions in the name of Allah in the future.

A WITNESS OF HISTORY TESTIFIES. (1990s-plus)

For the most part, it happened only in the 1990s that the opportunity availed itself to me to leave some testimony behind about my family's and my own past experiences. My loved ones had been decimated, but somehow I felt that it now fell to me to testify on their behalf as World War II's sole Kuttner survivor in the twenty-first century.

Over a number of years I pursued these avenues to let myself be heard on audio-visual tapes for about half-a-dozen archives searching out and specializing in survivors of the Nazi period. Around sixty years after the end of World War II, there are precious few of them left. Without exception, each of these organizations intends to store the filmed personal accounts of World War II "warriors" in vaults throughout the world, so that future generations can hear the first-hand testimony of those survivors' haunting stories and their aftermath a thousand years from now. (What wouldn't we give today to hear such tapes from the eras of Caesar and Napoleon!)

And so it came about that when I did not work on my eight novels and non-fiction books at night after coming home from my job at Sterling Publishing Company as the U.S. publicity director of "The Guinness Book of World Records" and the book import and export manager there, that I travelled as far as Yale University and the International University of South Miami in order to give verbal and filmed testimony about my exterminated family, because I did not want to hand Hitler and his henchmen the ultimate victory of not only exterminating their bodies but obliterating their achievements and lifestories as well.

Of course, the best-known of these audio-visual tapes on which

I testified for several hours must be considered Steven Spielberg's "Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation," which had distributed these tapes to all the Holocaust museums throughout the world, but Yale also stores another taped Holocaust interview of mine at its Fortunoff Video Archives while the Holocaust Education Center at the International University in South Miami filmed me as well for a couple of hours as did the Kindertransport Association in November 1994. Another film also included a photo of me, aged nine, the year Hitler came to power (1933), namely in Melissa Hacker's Kindertransport documentary "My Knees were Jumping," which was narrated by Joanne Woodward. In 2001, the talented movie-maker, Stefan Roloff, let me testify for a few minutes in his 2003 anti-Nazi underground documentary "The Red Orchestra" about his father's, my sister's and my own experiences during the war.

In fact, Stefan's father, Helmut Roloff, was a wellknown German pianist, who had clandestinely supported my mother and sister at Berlin's Holsteinische Strasse 24 as subtenants, supplying them with his own meager food rations in the early 1940s, and in 1942 he himself spent several months in a concentration camp for suspected anti-Nazi activities.

Fortunately, after years of hard preliminary research, my authenticated Holocaust documentation and especially my book "The Holocaust: Hoax or History? - The Book of Answers to Those Who Would Deny the Holocaust" were finally incorporated in several World-War-II-related museums, libraries and archives throughout the world, such as in Yad Vashem in Jerusalem. the Imperial War Museum in London, the Jewish Museum in Copenhagen, the Center for Anti-Semitism Exploration at the Technical University in Berlin as well as in Berlin's new Jewish Museum, and at Emory

University in Atlamta, Georgia, which is directed by the eminent Holocaust-history authority and author Deborah E. Lipstadt.

Likewise I have seen to it that my family's names have been entered now in the respective Berlin and Hamburg Memorial Books of Murdered Nazi Victims.

All these efforts of mine to help immortalize my annihilated family in any way I can, were doubly reinforced by those Muslim murderers who brag that their mission today is to exterminate the Judaeo-Christian faithfuls of the world as much as it once happened to be Hitler's policy in the 1930s and 1940s. Such a murderous program was, in fact, praised and encouraged on September 11, 2002, inside London's Finsbury Park mosque by its leading Imam there, with not a single word of objection being heard from his overflow congegation, which had actually come to that place of worship to celebrate the first anniversary of the destruction of American lives and property.

No wonder, I will continue to immortalize my own murdered family members. That's why their names are, furthermore, also now engraved on black marble pillars thousands of miles from their native lands and places of execution in the Florida Holocaust Memorial of Miami Beach, although equally important to me is the fact that the two M.K. monogrammed (M.K. for Margarete Kuttner) hand towels that my mother had

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packed into my England-bound Kindertransport suitcase in 1939 and which I deliberately never used or washed, so as not to obliterate her fingerprints on them when she had ironed them just before my departure from Nazi Berlin, are now forever on view at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C. and at the Jewish Museum in Berlin.

At the same time I tried to immortalize part of the disastrous Hitler and Stalin years in some of my eight previous books, for instance in such novels as "Condemned", "Absolute Proof" and "The Iron Virgin."

Just by sheer accident, I happened to be in a (now defunct) bookstore in my Jackson Heights (N.Y.) neighborhood back in the late 1970s when an elderly Hispanic lady there bought a copy of my novel "The Man Who Lost Everything" in the Spanish-language edition ("El hombre que lo perdió todo"), which actually became a bestseller in Latin America in 1977.

When I volunteered to autograph it for her, she refused my offer, calling me an impostor, but after I had presented my credentials to her, such as a Credit card, she hurled her arms around my neck and begged me to inscribe it on the frontispiece with: "To my everlasting love," which I did, without signing my name to this dedication, an omission she failed to notice, thank God.

Meanwhile, Jackson Heights - a cattle-grazing territory a hundred years ago - has grown into the polyglottic capital of the U.S.A., housing a peaceful ensemble of over 120 languages while the Borough of Queens, of which Jackson Heights is a part, can also pride itself of having the largest library system in America, and of having more Christians, Jews and Muslims live peacefully side by side than in any other urban area in the United States of America.

In fact, Jackson Heights was America's first garden cooperative apartment community and the most comprehensive planned community of its kind in the world. During World War II, one of the B-24 bombers dropping high explosives over Nazi Germany was actually christened "Spirit of Jackson Heights."

From where I live on Jackson Heights' 87th Street in the 1950-erected six-story Monticello complex of buildings, I can actually look down upon a sturdy row of 1920-constructed two-family red-brick houses, whose architecture is based on genuine old English garden homes. Now I can peacefully rest my tired eyes upon this architectural bliss whenever the spirit moves me and enjoy these rustic houses as well as their carefully tended verdant lawns and shrubbery fronting them.

And yet my favorite spot in historic Jackson Heights still remains its public library half a dozen blocks from where I live, a local branch of the just-mentioned Queensborough Public Library System.

Here I can always obtain most of the books ever published in the U.S. in a matter of days (including my own), take my research notes from them at home or study the volumes right there on its spacious, well-lit quiet premises most weekdays until eight o'clock in the evening. What more can an author wish for?

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Not surprisingly, to me, New York City is a beautifully cultivated metropolitan garden full of opulent flowers, yet at the same time still crisscrossed with its share of weeping willows and wanton weeds. Sounds a bit contrary. But then, so is New York: a bit contrary.

And if it comes to famous people I have met in that city, or anywhere for that matter, I am compelled to make this confession: Like everybody else, if I haven't worshipped, at least I have enormously admired some public figures from close-up, others from far away, throughout my entire life, whether it was in Berlin, London, L.A., Hamburg or New York. Among them: My all-time favorite: Winston Churchill, then Tracy and Turner, Jannings and Laughton, "Groucho" and Hepburn (Audrey only); even soccer stars like Stanley Matthews and Franz Beckenbauer. (Today I only recognize one sports hero in my life: Tiger Woods.) Still, I found great solace also meeting some of the other immortals of the past: Rita Hayworth and Frederic March, Schweitzer and Nelson Rockefeller, Ike around VE Day in London from afar with the Royal Family, Eleanor Roosevelt, "Satchmo" and Ethel Waters, Gertrude Lawrence, Uta Hagen, Ali, and Schmeling on his return from the U.S. after his first fight with Joe Louis. And my favorite sports figures: Chris Evert, McEnroe and Connors, Graf and Navratilova, even Tony Trabert and Maureen "Little Mo" Connolly in Forest Hills. Yes, also Truman taking his constitutional near the Waldorf and, earlier, Thomas Dewey leaving his voting booth in November 1948, feeling sure, like most Americans, he'd defeat Truman. And finally my brief encounters with the three men who changed history for the worse and were responsible for the murder of tens of millions of innocents, including my family, as well as for my own expulsion from my native country, Germany: Hitler, Göring and Goebbels.

All of this proved to be of great interest to Alan Merkin, the first President of Crown publishers. When Crown started out in a 3-room office in the same building on Park Avenue South as my employer Sterling, the white-maned Alan often questioned me in the elevator or on our way home

to Grand Central Terminal at night about my past,and one day we happened tp meet after work in the Belmore cafeteria on the ground floor of our offices, where he quizzed me in detail about my life under the Nazis since he contemplated publishing a book about the prelude to World War II.

He even encouraged me to hunker down and write my own biography and then let him take a look at it, but that happened to be in the mid-1960s when I was only just over forty years old and felt that I should wait at least two or three decades longer before gaining the maturity to literarily evaluate my past failures and successes. Later, Alan built up Crown into a giant publishing empire - who knows? - and perhaps he would really have published my autobiographical opus.

Naturally, I would have confided in that lifestory of mine, as I can finally do so today, that the person,whose policies had influenced my existence for the worse more than anybody else's actions, unsurprisingly turned out to be Hitler, as he did for hundreds of millions all over the world. I think it says a great deal in this connection even now that his loyal private secretary, Traudl Junge,(whom I had written about in my 1984 novel "Absolute Proof") actually announced in the 1990s documentary "Blind Spot": "Today I can say that he (Hitler) was a real criminal."

Even more telling are her remarks in her 2002 memoirs, "Through the Final Hours", in which she writes shortly before her death about the disillusionment that she had felt while taking down Hitler's dictation of his last will on April 28, 1945: "It was all the old phrases such as the Jews were to blame...It was maddeningly senseless."

I rest my case.

In the long run, though, all these occurrences turn out to be picayune matters...as are, ultimately, our puny lives in the huge expanding universe we inhabit for an all-too brief period only.

And yet....what are we, in the final analysis, to make of our petty existence in this vast expanse of time and space? Probably nothing but to live peacefully, constructively and lovingly side by side in the paradise God had created for us.

Which brings us to the final divine teasers that nobody has been able to answer me:

Why did God put us on Earth in the first place? (Could it be that we are only Stage Three of the divine evolutionary process?) But if God's purpose was for us to be creators and worshippers, why did He give us free reign also to be destroyers of life?

Equally important: Exactly what happened before the Big Bang eighteen billion years ago? In fact, what created the Big Mass of tightly-packed billion-square-mile matter before it blew apart and formed millions of galaxies with all those stars and planets in this endless universe?

Or will there be another contraction of universal matter one day, destroying all present existence, including Man's works, and prepare the world, for the next Big Bang twenty billion years from now, followed by a new creation of the cosmos?

And will then Beethoven and Moses, Rembrandt and Pasteur, Chaplin and Gandhi, Demosthenes and Curie, Lincoln and Jesus, Einstein and Tolstoy, you and me, still be remembered? Or none of us?

Come on, Albert, give us a hint!

And in all humility, just one more thing, God: During the Holocaust, nine-eleven, the time of the final throes of cancer, where the heck were You?

Of course, there are those amongst us who have somehow acquired God's answer to this and every other question regarding the Fate of Man and can explain it all away in eruuite terms expounded by deep-dish thinkers like Socrates, Schopenhauer and Teilhard de Chardin. But to analyze bitter tragedies and compulsive evil under those philosophers' super-refined magnifying glasses still does not seem to explain or excuse these misfortunes from happening all over and over again. Each age simply seems to have its own tyrants.

No wonder, sometimes history, life in fact, has truly overwhelmed me and I feel like a tiny boat being whipped along, helpless and rudderless, on a storm-tossed sea.

But at least I could make it to a venerable old age and actually celebrate my eightieth birthday with my good friend Loretta Reynolds and, a few days later, with another dear friend of mine, Helga Elb, who also happened to be born in Berlin just a couple of months after me. We ate and chatted at my favorite restaurant, the "Cavalier" in Jackson Heights, and here, as usual, the most professional (and my favorite) waiter, Ricardo, served us flawlessly a great meal.

And so I do, managed to survive good times and bad times, like all of us mortals, starting now on my eighth decade; and in complete fairness I must admit that God must have been quite impatient with me sometimes, with my grumblings and complaints about life, but then what else can you expect from puny Man?

Puny or not, I did find some solace and contentment in the many heartfelt birthday wishes I received; especially the long-distance calls from my native country, Germany: from Christel Bruhn and her husband Reinhold, whose parents had let me work for them in their Hamburg grocery store back in the Nazi 1930s as a young teen; from my old Berlin schoolfriend Fritz Hellms in

Hemmingen; even from my wonderful ailing friend and journalist Clara Kramer-Freudenthal (and her husband) in Norderstedt, who had loved my Hamburg grandmother Marie Fraenkel so very much sixty-five years ago; and from our mutual friend, and truly decent human being Reinhard "Ron" Hahn in Seattle, Washington, with whom I have corresponded for a few years, although I have actually never personally met those two latter marvelous German "pen-pals" of mine. And, of course, from my loving son, Stephen.

Not so surprisingly, I also heard from really good loyal friends in this country, from Anne Polte who was just then visiting Pennsylvania; Eve Sadler in Manhattan, and from one of my dearest friends ever, my brother-in-law Joe Klimmeck in San Rafael, California, who appeared to me to be a bit depressed this time.

So I really haven't too much of a leg to stand on when I maintain today that I have the right to grumble and complain about life generally, certainly not in the twenty-first century that has so far not dealt me any hard knocks of fate. Even so, letting off steam once in a while does tend to relax and pacify my ancient calcifying braincells lately in most mysterious ways.

In fact, sometimes I feel God must be getting quite a bit impatient with incorrigible me and, in-between creating all those new galaxies, He'd probably like to snap back at my tiny personage:

"What's the matter with you, Kuttner? Can't you see I'm busy? All I hear from you is complaints and self-pity and your prayers full of I want this, I want that. Don't mix me up with Santa Claus. Just snap out of it now, feeling so damn sorry for yourself. Enjoy the life I breathed into you and stop bellyaching already! Okay?"

Of course, God is right....